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COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE

NOVEMBER 21, 2003

#1566

A CONVENTION AS BIG AS ALL OUTDOORS

Wizard World Texas comes to Dallas/Ft.
Worth Nov. 21-23! Show Preview, Page 46



Do you have your holiday shopping started?

A million offered for Action #1

Diamond Comic Distributors President and CEO Steve Geppi has offered \$1 million for a Near Mint copy of *Action Comics* #1 (Jun 38).

"I'll pay at least \$25,000 for an unrestored, complete copy in good condition — and up to \$1 million for a genuine, Near Mint-condition copy of *Action Comics* #1," Geppi announced.

The offer came on the heels of Geppi's

display of an *Action* #1 at the first Las Vegas Comic-Con, which began Oct. 31.

The offer will only apply to copies of the issue graded 9.4 (NM) or above on the Comics Guaranty LLC grading scale.

Over the years, Geppi has acquired numerous Golden Age key issues as well as rare pieces of original art.

There's more on **Page 36!**

THE A LIST

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Trigun Vol. 1 TPB
Courageous Princess
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EXPLORING BLACK ADAM

MORE COMPLEX THAN A
TYPICAL VILLAIN

Black Adam is one of writer Geoff Johns' favorite characters.

By Nate Melby

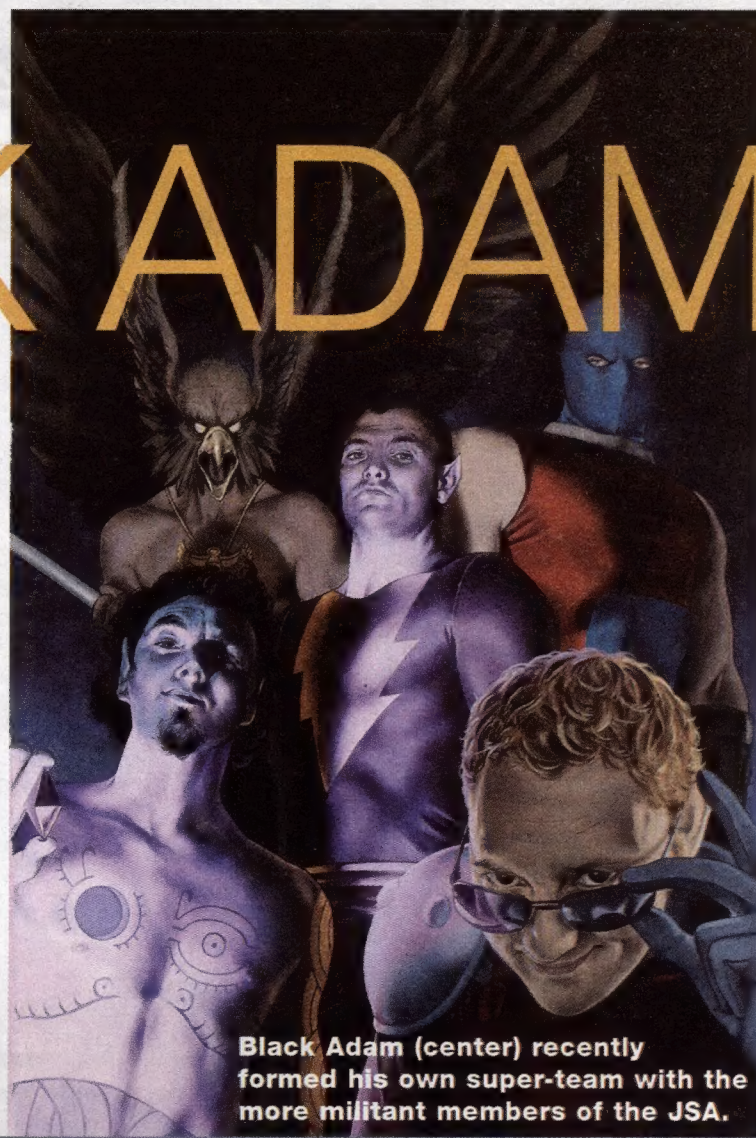
That's what Johns told *CBG* happened since the villain became a regular in the *JSA* title. Now, Johns will get a chance to explore Black Adam even further, when DC crosses over the Johns-written *JSA* and *Hawkman* in January and February.

Johns told *CBG*, "We have had Black Adam in the crew for a while now, and he has become one of my favorite characters, because he is much more complex than the typical villain — and much more complex than I ever thought he would be. We focused a lot on him and his background inside Kahndaq and how, in my mind, he is really misunderstood, even though he crosses the line.

"I think he is a little more misunderstood than The *JSA* even know."

The six-part weekly story arc "Black Reign" will begin in *JSA* #56 on Jan. 7 followed by *Hawkman* #23 a week later. The titles will then alternate every week until the middle of February.

Lightning strikes again on **Page 12!**



Black Adam (center) recently formed his own super-team with the more militant members of the JSA.

This issue was shipped November 3

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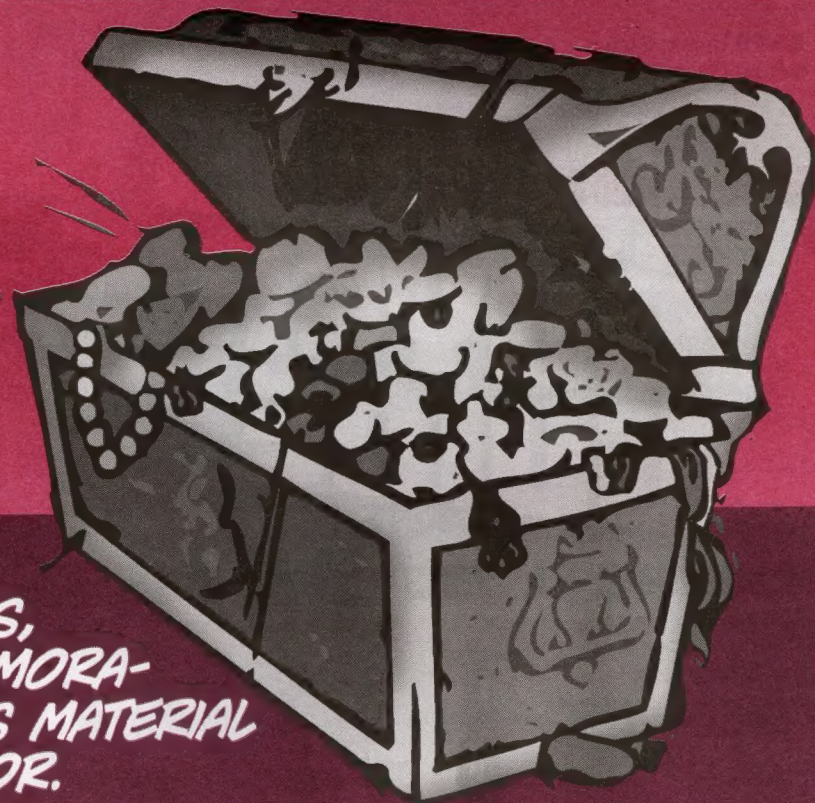
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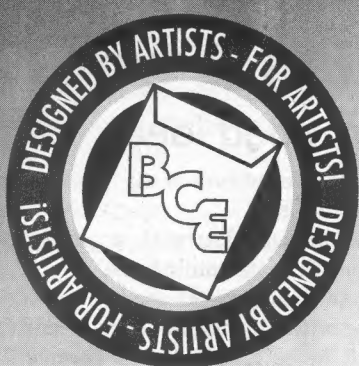
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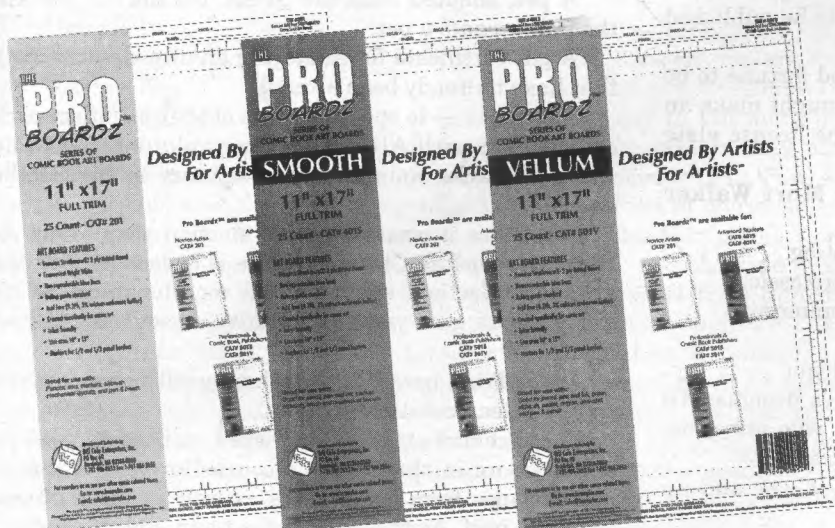


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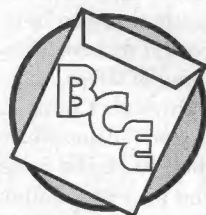
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EDITORIAL

Are you making a list? Checking it twice?

More than a decade ago, comics pros provided ideas.

The issue was dated Nov. 9, 1990, and it was our fifth year of producing an annual gift-giving guide. Once again, we'd approached a number of industry pros, asking them for gift-giving suggestions.

"For your holiday giving," one contributor wrote, "why not bestow the legacy of excitement, romance, fantasy, suspense, and wonder upon five lucky recipients?"

The contributor in this case was **Stan Lee**, and he continued, "All you need do is select five subscriptions to the five comic-book titles of their choice — or of yours. Naturally, I won't be the least bit disappointed, if those five carefully chosen comics happen to be published by good ol' Marvel!"

"As for me: Since I already have the good fortune to be a Marvel subscriber, a Ferrari convertible might make an acceptable second choice — especially if the license plate reads *Excelsior!*"

Beetle Bailey and *Hi and Lois* creator **Mort Walker** supplied the following thoughts:

"Give time and encouragement to the young.
"Give back some of your success to the profession.
"Give a portion of your energy to your community.
"Share your talent for good causes.
"Give the gift of love to everyone around you.

As for himself — well, there are always dreams: "I'd like one day with some of my old friends who are gone: *Dik Browne, John Fischetti, Milton Caniff, etc.*"

The late **Bill Woggon**, creator of *Katy Keene* and an inspiration to fans of design, wrote:

"Here are my five gifts which I would recommend people give!

"Subscription to *Comics Buyer's Guide*.



Maggie Thompson

"A stocking-stuffer of one of my 'Sis the Candy Kid' paper doll books.

"Cheer a comic-book fan with a gift subscription of his or her favorite comic book.

"Give a gift to the poor and needy.

"Have peace with our neighbors near and far."

And the gift he said he'd like to receive: "Love stamps to write and tell my fans how much I love them!"

Comics historian and writer-artist **Trina Robbins** suggested:

"A living Christmas tree, to be planted in a back yard after Christmas and to last forever.

"A pet, adopted from the SPCA, but only if you know the giftee *wants* a pet!

"A gift certificate for neutering an already-existing pet that hasn't already been altered.

"Your time — to spend with an elderly or infirm person or a person with AIDS — or just volunteering to help whatever cause you favor, from literacy to Big Brothers and Sisters."

And, since it was a national election year, "Your vote! We need it before Christmas. Use it or lose it." But there are many elections coming in the months ahead, so it's a gift you can give your community every time the polls open.

As for Trina herself? "I'd be happy with clean air, clean water, a clean coastline."

These contributions were picked at random, and we'll supply more in the weeks to come. But we'd like to run current ones from our readers as well as these glimpses from the past. As the year comes to an end, of course, we look back and to the future, hoping to shape the future by using what we learned from the past.

What's on *your* gift list? ♦

LETTERS

PREPARE FOR AFTERMATHS

Steven Fears

10701 S. Miller Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73170

I hope that, by the time this letter might see print, the terrible fires in California, particularly the San Diego area, will be out or under control.

I've been watching the news, as probably many of us have, with great interest, because we all know many people and friends out there. They've been in my thoughts and prayers lately. For those of us who have built collections over the years, the thought of

a disaster damaging or destroying what has taken many years to accumulate, can be unnerving and upsetting.

And the fact that it is also your *home*, where all of those things are, that can be damaged or destroyed makes it even worse. Of course, your life comes before any mate-



Letters To The Editor

rial objects.

Preparing for such things that may or may not happen is the hard part. Gather your family and make sure they're safe, first. Figure out what you actually can take with you in a moment's notice. Is your insurance up to date and can you lay your hands on the policy easily? Where will you go? How will you get there? And, with the worst cases, how will you recover? Believe me, the aftermath will be an ordeal.

I'm sure that there will be some relief organizations out there to help with the recovery process. I'm sure that many of

us would like to contribute to some of those, if possible.

What I'd like to propose is, through Comic-Con International and some of the other conventions prior to that one, a way to donate money to help with the relief.

What I propose is that maybe an extra dollar could be

CBG

OTHER OPINIONS

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added to the registration price (sort of like when we pay taxes: We can opt to pay an extra dollar to something). Of course, this would be an option. Or we could donate on site at the conventions. The money could go toward a specific organization or fund to be named later. This is just an idea. One can also give to such organizations as The Red Cross and The Salvation Army, which help when disasters like these happen. I know that, when many of us make the trip to San Diego next July, whether we fly or drive, we will be shocked by the devastation we'll see. Recovery will be an ongoing process and will continue for a long time after that.

If we as a group can contribute to the recovery and restoration, the rebuilding of lives and homes, and healing of the land, then we will have done something good.

TURKEYS?

Nelson Jimenez
75 Mapletree Ave.
Stamford, CT 06906

Since Thanksgiving is just around the corner, I think **CBG** should have an annual "turkey" award for "comics gone wrong." Here are my suggestions:

The Golden Age Turkey Award goes to *The Truth* mini-series from Marvel (great concept, terrible art).

The Silver Age Turkey Award goes to the *Born* mini-series from Marvel (left over 'Nam filler).

The Bronze Age Turkey Award goes to Marvel (for losing the rights to *Conan the Barbarian*).

The Mylar Age Turkey Award goes to *Legion* from DC (reboots galore, Superboy reintroductions, etc.).

I'm sure there were other turkeys in 2003, so I hope other fans write in their suggestions. And, if you want to include TV shows, you could include *Birds of Prey*, *The Tick*, etc. Speaking of shows, two of the hottest right now are *Smallville* and *Tarzan*.

This would be a great time for a new Apeman series. Who currently owns the rights to publish the character? I would love to see an *Archives* collection with the Joe Kubert, Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez, and John Buscema drawn stories. I believe the last really good *Tarzan* series was the one published by Dark Horse, when he fought The Predator. I was hoping that the *Superman/Tarzan* series would be as good as *Batman/Tarzan*, but it wasn't. So, publishers, bring back The Lord of the Apes!

'Nuff said!

BWF: Our annual Mopee Awards, "saluting" the turkeys of the Silver Age, will appear next week.

JUNK

Daniel E. McMasters
625A 23rd St.

Sacramento, CA 95816

What kind of immoral, mindless junk did I just read in *Spectacular Spider-Man* #5?

Instead of allowing Eddie Brock to die from hopelessly terminable cancer, instead of dodging the Venom "suit" long enough to let it die, as well, he "saves" Eddie by recombining him with Venom. Henceforth, every act of violence that Venom commits, every death that occurs at the hands of Venom, every drop of blood is on Spider-Man's hands.

And Paul Jenkins tries to wrap up this act of mind-boggling stupidity in some kind of flag of heroism. Saving the life of Osama bin Laden, Ted Bundy, or Adolph Hitler so they could live another day to kill more innocent human beings is unacceptable to any normal human being with a conscience. But Paul Jenkins wants us to accept this kind of nonsense as vaguely "noble," when it's Spider-Man giving Venom a new lease on life.

It's the kind of writing I've come to despise and expect from Spider-Man when he refuses to take out Venom or The Green Goblin, from Batman when he refuses to take out The Joker, and Superman when he refuses to simply grab Lex Luthor and throw him into the center of the sun.

I'm glad kids don't read comics any more, because I wouldn't want my kids, or anyone else's, to believe this behavior is heroic or admirable. Laughable is more like it. Spider-Man, the "hero" perpetuates the life of a villain who will proceed to kill (in future issues) innocent human beings. It makes me want to vomit.

JJM: But was it *in character*?

As far as most writers go, that has to trump any social consideration. Was the action consistent with what Spider-Man's done in the past — and, if it wasn't, did he set up enough of a cause to credibly make the change happen? I haven't yet read the story in question — and might or might not agree with your general conclusion afterward. But, if a character's been long and previously established to have turned against lethal force, I do feel that fact is going to have to figure in somehow.

CBG FOR ART'S SAKE

by Chris Smigliano



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MATTERS OF TASTE

John Genduso

1351 Knoll Park Ln.

Fallbrook, CA 92028

Upon reading Peter Laird's letter in *CBG* #1563, my initial reaction was, "This is a joke, right?" As I read on, I began to realize that he was serious! Am I the only one who finds it disturbing that this guy goes into bookstores looking for books that make mention of his *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* comics, almost as if he is seeking some sort of validation of his work? How thin-skinned is this guy?

I don't have anything against him. I'm sure he is a very talented and creative guy, but he has got to be kidding. His criticism of *500 Great Comic Book Action Heroes* was off the wall and disconnected from reality. His point seems to be that, if a book about comics doesn't mention *TMNT*, then it is worthless. I won't make any judgments about the value of the book but I will say this: The title refers to *Great Comic Action Heroes*. When I stop and think about my favorite comics heroes, I can honestly say that *TMNT* never enters my mind. I bought a couple of early issues of this title and found them to be mildly amusing, but I certainly didn't feel that I was witnessing comic-book history. I could probably list 1,000 heroes that I like more than *TMNT*. Heck, *Adolescent Radioactive Blackbelt Hamsters* was funnier than *TMNT*!

Laird also seems overly sensitive about the fact that his creations are not mentioned as the first successful comics creations outside the Big Two in 30 years. This is certainly debatable but Laird's reaction seems like nitpicking rather than objective criticism. Besides, what is his definition of success? *TMNT* may have generated numerous cartoons, movies, toys, and books, but what was the quality of these products? The comics were average, the cartoon was mind-numbing, and I think I would rather watch a double feature of *Ishtar* and *Howard the Duck* than those *TMNT* movies.

Laird has already proven himself in the entertainment world. Why cheapen his accomplishments with defensive criticisms of irrelevant books?

On another topic, I was struck by two recent reviews in *CBG* that I found completely off the mark.

When I went back to look at them, I noticed they were both by the same reviewer. The first went out of its way to criticize *1602* for being an Elseworlds title (even though the creators have said that it's not). There seemed to be a distinct agenda to downgrade this book, which is actually quite good. I'm curious to see if (or how) the creators are going to tie the series into Marvel continuity at some point.

The second was highly complimentary to *Essential Marvel Team-Up Vol. 1*. Has the reviewer actually gone back to read these stories? For the most part, they are awful! This title was merely a marketing ploy designed to draw attention to lesser-known characters by exploiting Spider-Man's popularity. I found it to be readable at only one point, and it was much later (during the Chris Claremont-John Byrne run). The Claremont-Byrne issues were great, because much more attention was paid to characterization and story continuity. Plotlines actually ran through several issues at a time and much more care was taken to make the appearances of guest stars seem a logical and natural progression of the story. I think it was actually the best Spidey title at the time. Outside of this run however, the title was just a glorified marketing ploy.

Does your reviewer actually feel that *Essential Marvel Team Up* (grade A-) is superior to *1602* (grade C)? Everyone's entitled to an opinion, but I can't see these reviews serving the interest of *CBG* readers.

"I wish *CBG* would focus on more mainstream titles."

Finally, I find the Reading Room section useful, but I wish *CBG* would focus on more mainstream titles. Comics are too expensive for me to pick up a title just to find out what's going on these days. So maybe *CBG* can tell me what's happening in *The Demon: Driven Out*, *Dr. Fate*, *Green Arrow*, *Hawkeye*, *Iron Man*, *Silver Surfer*, *Thor*, etc. I wouldn't mind seeing frequent reviews of these titles just to keep me apprised of what's going on. This would help me decide if I want to take the plunge or continue to stay away.

Maggie: Well, each point in your letter may simply boil down to what you say: "Everyone's entitled to an

opinion." Flap copy of *500 Great Comic Book Action Heroes* describes the contents as covering "virtually every comic book hero ever created in the United States and Britain."

So it should be noted that the book covers such characters as *Congorilla*, *Bloodstone*, *Darkie's Mob*, and the one-shot-appearing *Dragon Chaing*. Characters were not eliminated because they failed to entertain.

To include them while never mentioning the *Turtles* was, indeed, a strange call. And that's what Laird was saying.

BWF: For another view of the book, see Jack Abramowitz' review in *Reading Room* this week.

As for the mix, as the person who approves the reviews and edits and lays out the section each week, I try for a mix of mainstream and independent material. There are some reviewers who would like nothing more than to review issue after issue of a given title, but that wouldn't serve the feature's purpose of introducing or exposing a varied range of material to our readers.

I WANT IT I WANT IT I WANT IT

Jon Hart

1215 Dustins Way

Warrensburg MO 64093

In response to Alan Porter's letter in *CBG* #1564: I, too, would buy a complete run of the '60s *Batman* TV show on DVD, but I'd rather see them issue full seasons of *Batman the Animated Series* first.

Yes, I know that they have been sporadically issuing four episodes at a time, but I don't hold out much hope that they'll make it through the entire run at this pace. *BtAS* is clearly in a class by itself and deserves to be presented in a format for collectors. I have no problem with issuing single-volume DVDs for the kids' market, but I'm an obsessed completist and I want the whole thing now!

My one other request is for Marvel to finish giving the Claremont-Byrne *X-Men* run the *Masterworks* treatment. I've been sitting on the first few volumes, waiting for them to finish my collection for quite some time.

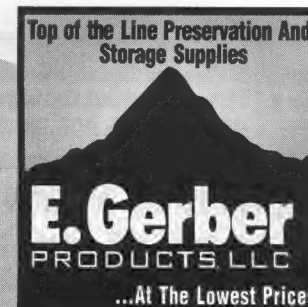
I'm bitter, I'm cranky, and I'm holding my breath until I get what I want.

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775R	7 3/4 x 10 1/2	Silver/Golden Comics - 1950's-70's	\$20.00	\$66.00	\$288.00
800R	8 X 11	Golden Age Comics - 1940's-50's	\$21.25	\$70.00	\$306.00
825R	8 1/4 x 11	Super Golden Age Comics	\$22.25	\$73.00	\$318.00
875R	8 3/4 x 12	Large Comics, Mag. & Letter	\$24.25	\$78.00	\$348.00
900R	9 x 12	Standard Magazines	\$29.50	\$97.00	\$420.00
914R	9 x 14 1/2	Legal Size	\$35.50	\$116.00	\$504.00
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		Add Shipping & Handling*	\$2.00	\$7.00	\$22.00

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625M2	6 1/4 x 10 1/2	Reader's Digest & Paperbacks	\$10.50	\$35.00	\$150.00
700M2	7 x 10 3/4	Current Comics- 1990's	\$10.75	\$36.00	\$155.00
725M2	7 1/4 x 10 3/4	Standard Comics - 1970's-90's	\$11.00	\$37.00	\$160.00
775M2	7 3/4 x 10 3/4	Silver/Gold Comics - 1950's-70's	\$11.50	\$38.00	\$165.00
800M2	8 x 10 3/4	Golden Age Comics - 1940's-50's	\$12.00	\$39.00	\$175.00
825M2	8 1/4 x 10 3/4	Super Golden Age Comics	\$12.50	\$42.00	\$180.00
875M2	8 3/4 x 12	Large Comics, Mag. & Letter	\$12.75	\$43.00	\$185.00
900M2	9 x 12	Standard Magazines	\$16.25	\$53.00	\$225.00
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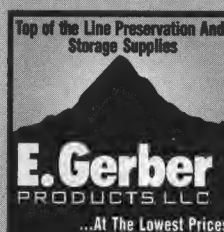
Price per: Item#	Size	Description	50	200	1000
675FB	6 3/4 x 10 1/2	Current Comics - fits 700	\$9.50	\$31.00	\$135.00
700FB	7 x 10 1/2	Standard Comics - fits 725	\$10.00	\$32.00	\$140.00
750FB	7 1/2 x 10 1/2	Silver/Golden Comics - fits 775	\$10.50	\$35.00	\$150.00
758FB	7 5/8 x 10 1/2	Golden Age Comics - fits 800	\$11.25	\$37.00	\$160.00
778FB	7 7/8 x 10 1/2	Super Golden Age Comics - fits 825	\$12.00	\$39.00	\$170.00
825FB	8 1/4 x 10 1/2	Large Comics, Mag. & Letter - fits 875	\$13.00	\$42.00	\$185.00
858FB	8 5/8 x 11 1/2	Standard Magazines	\$14.00	\$46.00	\$200.00
		Add Shipping & Handling*	\$4.00	\$14.00	\$54.00

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Price per: Item#	Size	Description	100	500	2000
675HB	6 3/4 x 10 1/2	Current Comics - fits 700	\$8.00	\$35.00	\$120.00
700HB	7 x 10 1/2	Standard Comics - fits 725	\$8.50	\$36.00	\$125.00
750HB	7 1/2 x 10 1/2	Silver/Golden Comics - fits 775	\$9.00	\$39.00	\$135.00
758HB	7 5/8 x 10 1/2	Golden Age Comics - fits 800	\$9.75	\$41.00	\$145.00
778HB	7 7/8 x 10 1/2	Super Golden Age Comics - fits 825	\$11.00	\$47.00	\$160.00
825HB	8 1/4 x 10 1/2	"Large Comics, Mag. & Letter"	\$12.00	\$50.00	\$170.00
858HB	8 5/8 x 11 1/2	Standard Magazines	\$13.00	\$56.00	\$190.00
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For *CBG* Reader Question of the Week #1560 and #1564, we asked for input. The year's end approaches, and we ask again:

What five things would you suggest as a gift? What one thing would you most want to receive? Why?

Send your response to *Oh, So?*, *Comics Buyer's Guide*, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990, or to ohso@krause.com.

SCARED OUT OF COMICS

Don Porges

53 Maple Ave.

Cambridge MA 02139

Oh, you say in *CBG* #1563 you want to hear about the comic-book story that scared me most?

How about the story that sent me fleeing out of comics for more than a year and gave me nightmares for years afterwards? Will *that* do?

I was 7, the year was 1966, the comic book was *Action Comics* #335, and the story, featuring Supergirl, was "The Prize of Peril."

In this bizarre Silver Age spectacular, under pressure from a talent scout and her boyfriend Dick Malverne, Supergirl enters the "Miss Universe" beauty pageant (presumably no relation to the real-life event of the same name, which did exist at the time). At first, she doesn't want to win, fearing the attention of being Miss Universe would blow her secret identity; but then, for some mysterious reason, she begins to cheat in order to win.

Once she wins, she is spirited away to another planet. The Miss Universe contest actually feeds into the Miss Cosmos contest, which is just what it sounds like — but Supergirl knows this all along, of course — and *also* knows that the winner of Miss Cosmos can never return to her home planet, for reasons yet unknown, so she cheats in order to spare some other poor sucker. What a girl!

Once on the contest planet, Supergirl meets two

other finalists and three mysterious maidservants with their faces covered in mummy-like bandages (lead-lined, of course, so she can't see underneath). The three maidservants are exiles from their home planets for, again, reasons unknown.

Supergirl wins this contest fair and square, because of her wonderful performance in the talent competition, her talent being "squeezing coal into diamonds." (Boy, they loved that back then.)

"Supergirl's prize is to spend the night in the 'Cabinet of Eternal Youth,' which is coffin-sized."

Supergirl's prize is to spend the night in the "Cabinet of Eternal Youth," which is coffin-sized.

During the night, the bandaged women come to Supergirl and warn her to get out before she gets what they got when they themselves won the contest (surprise) — they take off the bandages and their faces are oddly and asymmetrically twisted. (I now wonder if some of this was visually inspired by the famous "Eye of the Beholder" episode of *The Twilight Zone*.) Turns out the Cabinet of Eternal Youth is really an uglifier machine, and the contest organizer is really ugly himself underneath his latex mask.

After atomizing the three former winners, the bad guy tells his story: He flew through some uglifying cosmic rays years ago, turned ugly himself, and now "hates beauty" and does this for laughs. Supergirl bursts out of the Cabinet, apparently unaffected, and sends the bad guy to "space prison." Yay! Problem solved!

Except not.

Supergirl returns home and looks in the mirror, and there she is with her face mangled. (It took longer to work on her because of her invulnerability, she says, which seems like cheating to me.) In looking at the art now, it looks a lot as if she's been beaten. Silver

Age DC had a huge obsession with freakishness, but this was just too much.

I flung the book away and had a fear of all comics for a long time after that. Eventually, I discovered Marvel Comics and realized that, although Doctor Doom was hideously scarred, they were never going to show it to us.

For that alone, they have my lifelong loyalty.

SCARY STUFF

Jack Gilreath

19 Martinview Rd.

Bellevue, NE 68005

I've read lots of scary comics in my life: lots of great E.C. classics, some more modern horror, even a few that were so *bad* it was scary.

The problem is, I read these as an adult. When I read an E.C., I'm aware of things like the passage of time that has occurred since they were published and the great talents we've lost.

When I read *Hellboy*, which I consider among the very best comics ever, the nobility, power, and sheer beauty of the art makes me almost wish it were all real. I emphasize *almost*.

The result is, I'm very rarely scared while reading a comic book these days.

Which leaves *Captain America Annual* #3 as the most frightening comic book I've ever read. I was 11 when I bought this gem: drawn and written by Jack Kirby.

What made it scary was the art, dialogue, pacing, mood, and even the lettering.

In the issue, Cap encounters an alien, called The Captive, on a man's farm. The obviously terrified alien, young and frail, tells Cap of his escape and of the vast alien host seeking his recapture.

As the plot advances, we learn why they seek him so desperately. The Captive feeds on life forces like a vampire.

After he feasts on the farmer, we see a gradual change in The Captive, growing in size and power — going from boyish victim to slaving beast. The panels depicting this horrific change and the crescendo of the dialogue still get me.

So, if you want a scary comic, read *Captain America Annual* #3. Just make sure you're 11 years old. It'll help.

A FRIGHTENING PAGE

Gary Ostanski

The most frightening comic book I ever read was just a one-page story in a coverless ACG comic book that I got for a nickel sometime around 1963 or 1964 at Kendall's corner store on Langmeyer Street in Buffalo. It might have been a *Forbidden Worlds*, but I can't remember right now.

I think the lead story was "Robertson's Robots," but this one-page story was called something like "Face of the Specter."

In it, an old man was dying in bed from some mysterious illness, and, every night, this horrible ghost would come and haunt him.

It was one of those green ACG ghosts, but this was the first one I'd ever seen, and it really weirded me out.

In the morning, no one would believe the old man, when he tried to tell them about the specter, and then at night the specter would return to haunt him again

LAST KISS

BY JOHN LUSTIG

The Amazing Flip Flounders, Part 4: Believing that his father is a water-breathing mutant, Flip Flounders ponders his place in the world! Is he fated to follow in his dad's soggy footsteps? Will he become a seagoing superhero—or will he be content to just splash around in the wading pool of life?

Art by Mario Hernandez



And then there's my fear of water! It's so...wet!

and again, and *still* no one would believe him!

So how did they save him?

[Spoiler Warning: Yes, the rest of the letter discusses the ending to a one-pager; we're here to protect you, readers.]

They *didn't*! The old man *died*! And, when they found his body in the morning, parts of his face had turned green — it was the face ... of the specter!

This story scared the prunes out of me, partly because of the old man's face turning green — it always got to me when Superman turned green from too much kryptonite — but also because the old man just didn't have a chance against this spirit.

If there was any motivation on the specter's part, I was too little to get it, so what I *did* get was a sense of this innocent old man's isolation and helplessness in the face of this sheer, naked cruelty and malice that came from beyond the grave.

And it *got* him!

REMEMBER WHEN?

Chris Juricich

1808 Chestnut St.
Berkeley, CA 94702

It occurs to me as I look over the racks of the new comics this week: all nice-looking with good production values, bright colors, nice drawings from what I can see. Impressive on many levels, these 21st century funnybooks, but it's 90% super-heroes.

Stifle a yawn, as I regale you with a time when there was a publisher that published, not only super-

hero comic books, but also a whole bevy of other titles from a myriad of genres, of *unusual* genres, and it's stuff that one rarely sees today. Now, think about it, and here's a nice sampling of DC comics from the mid-1960s that covered any base (and more) than you might imagine.

- *Tomahawk* — rip-roarin' adventures on the American frontier during the Revolutionary War years

- *Sea Devils* — adventures under the sea with scuba divers

- *All-American Men of War* — a Navajo P-51 Mustang pilot in the skies over Europe in the Second World War

- *Superman's Girlfriend, Lois Lane* — nominally a romance title, it was a humor and a romance and an adventure title in every issue

- *Rip Hunter, Time Master* — a guy who traveled in time, having adventures from the dawn of time to the time of the pyramids and beyond

- *My Greatest Adventure* — simple, science-fiction tales of first-person adventures

- *Mystery in Space* — adventures on other worlds and outer space

- *House of Mystery* — mystery and horror wrapped up every month

- *Showcase* — a title that gave us super-heroes as well as Cave Carson, Firefighters, Tommy Tomorrow, Dr. No, I Spy, G.I. Joe, Enemy Ace, B'wana Beast, Top Gun, Firehair, and Jason's Quest. And of course, there were The Metal Men, who weren't quite super-heroes

but, then, couldn't be pigeon-holed into any genre.

Yeah, those were the mid-'60s, before Batman lit the fire even more for super-hero adventures. I guess we didn't realize what we had in terms of diversity back then — in a simpler time. A variety of genres is something that creators nowadays are slowly working with the publishers to re-implement. I mean, super-heroes are all well and good, but I still like Westerns, mystery, crime, science fiction, slice of life, time-travel, etc.

Today's comics don't come close to providing what I'd like to see in funnybooks — small wonder that I find myself drifting back to the old boxes to relive the adventures of five soldiers in a Haunted Tank of World War II — or how Binky might get out of this current mess he's found himself in. ♦

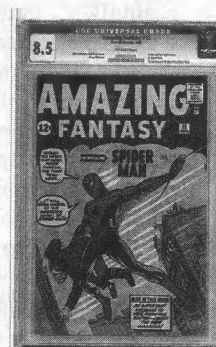
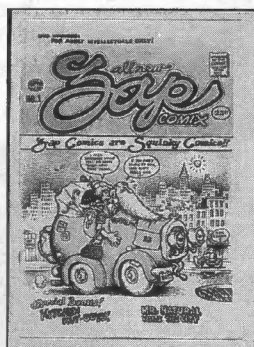
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You *must* include your name, address, and a daytime phone number on any electronic communication for it to be considered for publication. If part or all of your message is specifically *not* for republication, please indicate that in your message.

For our submission guidelines, please send a request (with a self-addressed stamped envelope) to Maggie Thompson at the address above or e-mail cbgnews@krause.com



NOVEMBER 21st JERRY WEIST e-BAY AUCTION TO FEATURE SUPERMAN NO. 1, and VERY FINE PLUS C.G.C. AMAZING FANTASY #15!

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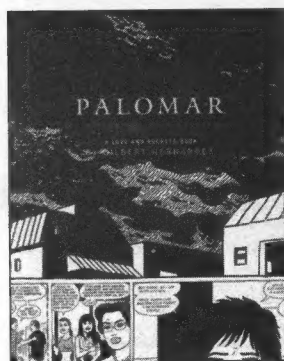
Give till it hurts (or at least aches)

Suggestions for holiday giving

When I run over in my mind the list of gifts that I owe people, it occurs to me that the one gift that I should give is getting in this column on time to dear Brent Frankenhoff. Week after week, Brent cajoles, nags, implores, and weeps to me to get this column in. It's become a charming little ritual. But I realize that I shouldn't be putting Brent through this. So you'd think I would have this column, the gift-giving guide, in on time, wouldn't you? Wouldn't you? (**Managing Editor's note:** This column's deadline was Oct. 24. It arrived Oct. 29.)

Anyway, this is the first time I've taken part in the legendary **CBG** Holiday Gift Guide. I feel a little choked up. I don't know what to say. Must rally.

OK, name five things you would recommend as a gift. Ah, that's easy.



1. Palomar by Gilbert Hernandez (Fantagraphics, \$39.95) This hefty, barely liftable hardcover collects all of the "Heartbreak Soup" stories from the pages of *Love and Rockets* by Gilbert Hernandez. I say with no equivocation that this is one of the absolute all-time masterpieces of comics art, a tale of love, hate, life, death, revenge, and redemption that

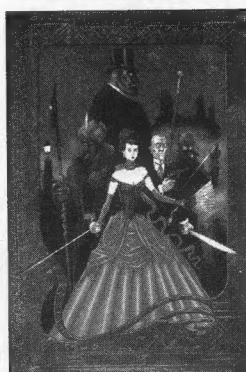
belongs on the shelf beside any work of art you can name. "Heartbreak Soup" is set in Palomar, a small, mythical town somewhere in Mexico, and, as the stories open, we meet a cast of characters engaged in the complicated adventure known as living: Loverboy Manuel is romancing the lovely teen-ager Pipo; new kid in town Heraclio is trying to fit in with the other guys; lovelorn Tipin Tipin is eating heartbreak soup after being beat up by Zomba, queen of women; and two very different women, Chelo and Luba, are involved in a war of the banadoras, or bath givers.

Over the next 42 pages, a mystical tale unfolds, comprising the simple parts of everyday life, and we get to know all these characters, and dozens more, as if they were our best friends. And, over the next 522 pages, Hernandez spins a tale that covers every possible human emotion. Rarely has any work of art been so fully realized in its compassion for humans, their weaknesses and failures and their triumph in spite of this. With great design and deluxe paper, *Palomar* makes a handsome gift. It will look great just sitting on someone's coffee table ... but anyone who doesn't crack it open and immerse himself or herself in the tales of Palomar is missing out on one of the greatest achievements of the comics form.

2. League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: The Absolute Edition Vol. 1 by Alan Moore and Kevin O'Neill (DC Comics, \$75) Sure, it's expensive, but sometimes you just need to go whole-hog. A two-volume, oversized slipcased edition of Moore's frothy masterpiece of entertainment, the first volume reprints the comic book mini-series, illustrated by Kevin O'Neill. The second includes Moore's scripts, with previously unseen illos by

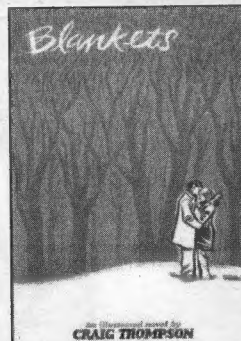
hey kids! COMICS!

By Heidi MacDonald

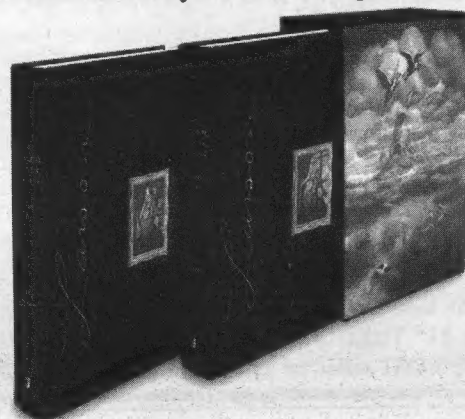


Heroes & Monsters: The Unofficial Companion to the League of Extraordinary Gentlemen by Jess Nevins, a fact-filled guide to all the allusions and layers of Moore's world.)

3. Blankets by Craig Thompson (Top Shelf, \$30) I've gone on here before about how great *Blankets* is, so I'll keep the gushing to a minimum this time. *Blankets* would make a fine gift for any young adult or anyone who loves comics. A wonderful coming of age story about love and becoming your own person, *Blankets* is well on its way to becoming a comics classic.



4. The Complete Far Side 1980-1994 by Gary Larson (Andrews & McMeel, \$135) Call it the DVD syndrome for books: yet another super-deluxe slipcased, leather-bound edition of a classic work that includes every strip that ever issued from Larson's deranged mind, including several that haven't been reprinted before. An introduction by Steve Martin gets things off to



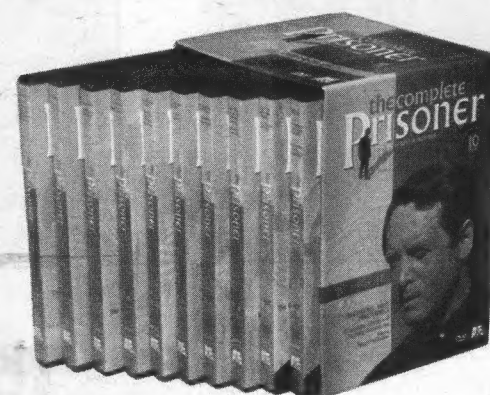
a rollicking start. The price tag seems hefty until you realize you are getting more than 1,250 pages of cartoons. It's hard to believe that it's been almost a decade since Larson ended this strip, but, if you are haunted, as I am, by the image of children chasing after the merry music tinkling from a liver truck or a cat warily eyeing crude lettering on a dryer door that reads "cat fud" ... then this book is a must-have.



5. Iron Wok Jan! by Shinji Saijo (\$9.95, Comics One) For a more modest gift, this wacky tale of a Chinese restaurant in Japan, where cooking is more important than life or death, will amuse almost everyone. Angry loner Jan is pitted against the more restrained Kiruko in a battle to make fried rice to prove whose cuisine will reign supreme. This book is

campy to the max, but the colorful characters, inventive plots, bizarre recipes, and cooking scenes drawn like fight scenes makes this one of the most entertaining manga titles on the market. There are six volumes currently available.

As for what gift I would like to receive, I have to say it is a tie. Either *The Complete Prisoner* on DVD or *The Complete Monty Python* on DVD. I only started watching DVDs less than a year ago. I am not one for sitting around the house watching movies or, God knows, TV shows, but all those spiffy extra features on DVDs won me over. Unlike most of my friends, I never bought a



single laserdisc. I knew that, someday, something superior would come along that would transform home entertainment. Anyway, call me an ITC freak, but *Monty Python* and *The Prisoner* are my two all-time favorite TV shows, both emerging from late '60s England (as did *Upstairs, Downstairs* and *I, Claudius*), a period which was to TV what the '20s were to ballet — what with Stravinsky and Diaghilev and Nijinsky and what not — I suppose. Either one of these shows would be a Desert Island DVD for sure.

Wow, so that's it. I made it through my first gift-giving guide. As we head into the holiday season, may all your Amazon wishlists come true!

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CURRENT COMICS

"At **CBG**, we think more great comics are being published today than ever before. It's our mission to keep you informed about the people and publishers making news today."

Hulk out!

An early review of the expanded DVD!

Screening Room, Page 24

The creators, the characters, and the series people are talking about today!

IN BRIEF

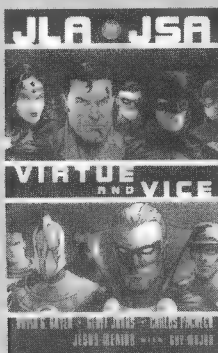
DC signs Pacheco

DC has signed artist Carlos Pacheco to a three-year exclusive contract.

"All these years, the DC characters have seemed like expensive toys in a store: something you can look at but you can't play with," Pacheco said. "Every time I saw an issue of *JLA*, *JSA*, *Green Lantern*, *Legion*, or *Teen Titans*, I dreamed about what I would do with them. Well, the wait is over. I'm ready to take these toys and have the time of my life playing with them!"

DC Vice President Editorial Dan DiDio said, "It was essential to bring someone of Carlos' caliber to DC — not only to lend his considerable talents to our ongoing, core series, but also to help in relaunching some of our other prestigious characters."

Pacheco is the cover artist on *JSA*, draws *Arrowsmith*, and will also work on an upcoming *Superman/Batman* story arc written by Jeph Loeb.



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You'll receive a weekly preview of upcoming sections — as well as instant news on breaking stories in today's comics hobby!

Black Adam aims to take back his country

Storyline will target a different form of justice

By **Nate Melby**

In the new "Black Reign" storyline that will jump between *JSA* and *Hawkman*, writer Geoff Johns plans to deal with Black Adam in his attempt to take back his home country of Kahndaq.

Johns told **CBG**, "The storyline was what happens when someone else decides that justice should be accomplished differently — and what happens when some of the members and friends of The JSA decide to go along with a different form of justice: Who's right? What's right? And what kinds of conflict will that lead to?"

"The first part is focused on Black Adam's team and the country of Kahndaq, and you kind of see what the status quo is, what it has been like for a while, and what Black Adam hopes to turn it in to. When that happens, members of The JSA become determined to bring home everyone who is under Black Adam's influence whom they care about."

A cool ride. "The coolest thing about



it is Black Adam and his group going toe-to-toe with The JSA. That is going to be a lot of fun, but at the same time there is a lot of character growth and interaction among all the members of The JSA and a lot of arguments. This isn't simply going off to fight Johnny Sorrow or the Ultra-Humanite. This is something else, because the members of Black Adam's team are people whom members of The JSA care about. They are trying to understand *why* they are doing what they're doing — and it is going to be a cool ride."

"It is going to be a cool ride."

But why cross over a JSA story with the stand-alone *Hawkman* title? Johns said it had been a natural thing for him to do because of *Hawkman*'s longstanding connection with Black Adam.

"*Hawkman* is already a major character in *JSA*, so it was a matter of saying, 'Why would we cross this over?' The first part of *Hawkman* takes place in St. Roche, and the members come to St. Roche for Mardi Gras and interact outside of a super-hero setting to learn more about *Hawkman*'s city," Johns said.

A natural. "It was a natural, because we had been toying with the idea of doing a crossover event, and — with the history between Black Adam and *Hawkman* and with what *Hawkman*'s role in the story turns out to be — it is a pretty big story for him. Also, because of the fact that, thousands of years ago, Black Adam was one of his allies, *Hawkman* really understands where he is coming from — at least, he *thinks* he does and might even agree with him to an extent."

Johns said he couldn't emphasize sufficiently how important continuity is to



him. He said that is one of the reasons he loves working on multiple DC titles.

"The best thing about DC Comics — and the reason I signed with them — is that, in their super-hero universe, their main goal is to tell a cohesive monthly story set in this great world of characters.

"They are going to interact. There are going to be tonal changes that affect everything, and it is not like doing crossovers every month, but more of a coherent universe. DC is more concerned with telling monthly stories and not producing trade paperbacks. There is no mandate to stretch out monthly stories, which I am happy with.

"I like writing a monthly book. I *don't* like writing trade paperbacks. There is stuff that happens in 'Black Reign' that will affect characters in *JSA* for the next year.

There will also be a roster shake-up. The whole *point* of it is to show what these guys believe in and what justice is to them." ♦

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Hedge Knight moves from Image

Devil's Due to release DB Productions licensed titles

DB Productions, the company that has been producing George R.R. Martin's *The Hedge Knight* via Image Comics, has announced it will begin publishing all its licensed products through Devil's Due Studios.

Devil's Due is the studio behind *G.I. Joe*, which recently left Image's distribution services.

DB Productions New Business Director and Vice President Les Dabel told *CBG*, "It will be a lot less for us costwise. We really weren't making much of a profit on these books, but the majority of it went to Image for printing and publishing fees. With Devil's Due, they get a percentage based on how well the book does. With the audience we are targeting, the Image name does not really help as much as it does with our original ti-

By **Nate Melby**

ties. A lot of off-the-street readers do not know who Image is; they are looking for George R.R. Martin, so, regardless of whom we go with, the target fan base is there for us."

"Our goal is to show the world that comics are not just for little kids."

— *Les Dabel*

Devil's Due will begin publishing the series with *The Hedge Knight* #4 and continue through the rest of the six-issue mini-series. It will also publish a collected edition of the first three issues. DB Productions will produce other licensed adaptations. Richard A. Knaak's *The Legend of Huma* will be released as *Dragonlance*, with the first issue scheduled for a January release. By late spring, the firm's tentative science-fiction and fantasy schedule includes adaptations of Robert Silverberg's *The Majipoor Chronicles: The Seventh Shrine*, Raymond E. Feist's *The Wood Boy*, and Tad Williams' *The Burning Man*. Williams' work will be illustrated by Brett Booth.

Dabel added, concerning the company's plans for its licensed properties, "There are several other authors we are going to be signing whom I cannot identify at the moment, because the contracts haven't been signed. Altogether, though,

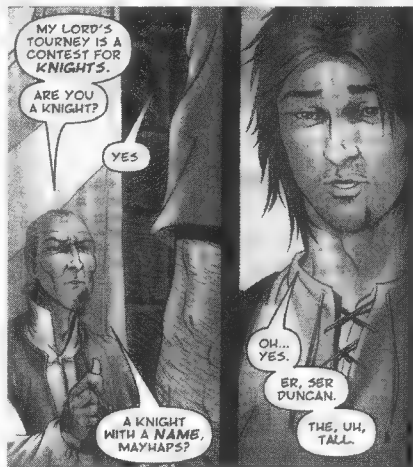
there are about 12 of them.

"What we are trying to do is have five to eight licensed books coming out through Devil's Due. All of our books have sold really well and, since they are by *New York Times* best-selling authors, they come with their own fan base. We have people who normally don't buy comic books who are now going into comic-book stores — which is something a lot of retailers have been telling us. Our goal is to show the world that comics are not just for little kids."

Dabel said it was his brother Ernst who had come up with the idea of adapting the work of some of their favorite authors into comic-book form. "When we first started, we self-published two independent titles for two of our friends — and that didn't really go anywhere. So my brother came up with the idea of contacting George Martin and asking him to adapt his books into comics. It was a long shot, but we were able to pull it off.

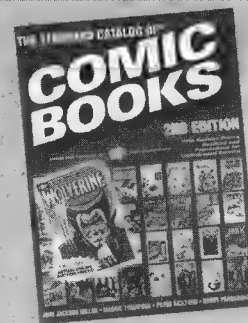
"Right now, he is really happy with what we accomplished so far. He then went around and introduced us to quite a few people — and, the next thing we knew, we had a line of authors asking us to adapt their novels into comics."

But, despite the migration of the firm's licensed items, some of DB Production's projects will remain as is. Dabel said, "I want to stress that we are not leaving Image. We still have a great working relationship with Jim Valentino and the rest of the staff there, and we plan to continue publishing our original books — like *Legacy* — through Image at this time." ♦



George R.R. Martin's *The Hedge Knight* is the first licensed property produced by DB Productions.

NOW SPEAKING



We're continuing to discuss the new *Standard Catalog of Comic Books* 2nd Edition (shipping now!) and all things comics-related on your radio dial (well, some of your radio dials).

In the coming weeks, tune into coauthor John Jackson Miller on:

November 10

Appleton, Wis.: WHBY 1150 AM "The Good Neighbor Show," 9:30 a.m. CT

November 18

Erie, Pa.: WJET 1400 AM, 8:35 a.m. ET

November 19

Lexington, Ky.: WLAP 630 AM, 7:45 a.m. ET

Elyria, Ohio: WEOL 930 AM, 9:10 a.m. ET

November 25

Ottawa, Ontario: CFRA 580 AM, 10 p.m. ET

December 1

Tacoma, Wash.: KLAY 1180 AM, 3 p.m. PT

More program notes to come — please tune in!

NEW COMICS shipping Nov. 16-22

The following information is taken from publisher and distributor solicitations and updates and is as accurate as possible at press time. Check with your local retailer to find out what day new comics go on the shelves. Comics that are delayed or rescheduled will be tracked in future *CBG* Calendars.

Note: ♦ indicates a rescheduled comic book that appeared in a previous *CBG* Calendar.

Archie Comic Publications

Archie Americana Series: Best of 50s Vol. 2, \$10.95
Archie Digest #203, \$2.39
Archie: Day By Day Vol. 1 TP, \$10.95
Archie's Mysteries #32, \$2.19
Mighty Crusaders Vol. 1: Origin of A Super Team TP, \$12.95
Sabrina Vol. 2 #52, \$2.19
Veronica #146, \$2.19

CPM Manga

Adventure Kid Book 4: Input Devices GN, \$16.95

CrossGen

Crossovers #11, \$2.95
Crux #32, \$2.95

Crux Vol. 4 TP Chaos Reborn, \$15.95
Motu He Man Rise of Snake People #2, \$2.95
Route 666 #18, \$2.95
Scion #42, \$2.95
Solus #9, \$2.95
Way of the Rat Traveler Vol. 1: Walls of Zhumar TP, \$9.95

Dark Horse

Autobiographix TP, \$14.95
B.P.R.D.: There's Something Under My Bed One-Shot, \$2.99
Ghost In the Shell 2: Man-Machine Interface #10, \$3.50
Grendel: God & the Devil #10, \$4.99
Lone #3, \$2.99
Mother, Come Home TP, \$14.95
Oh My Goddess! Vol. 17 Traveler TP,

\$17.95
Spyboy: The M.A.N.G.A. Affair TP, \$9.95

Star Wars: Republic #60, \$2.99

DC Comics

Absolute Danger Girl Oversized HC, \$75.00
Arrowsmith #5, \$2.95
Batgirl #46, \$2.50
Batman Adventures #8, \$2.25
Batman Gotham Knights #47, \$2.75
Batman: Detective #27 HC, \$19.95
Birds of Prey #61, \$2.50
Cinnamon: El Cielo #4, \$2.50
Human Target #4, \$2.95
iCandy #3, \$2.50
JLA: Liberty and Justice Oversized SC, \$9.95

Kamikaze #2, \$2.95
League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Book Two HC, \$24.95
Legion Secret Files 3003, \$4.95
Lobo Unbound #4, \$2.50
Lucifer #44, \$2.50
On the Road To Perdition Book Two: Sanctuary, \$7.95
Outsiders #6, \$2.50
Possessed #5, \$2.95
Powerpuff Girls #44, \$2.25
Robin #120, \$2.25
Sleeper #11, \$2.95
Smallville #5, \$3.95
Smax #4, \$2.95
Superman/Thundercats, \$5.95
Superman: Metropolis #10, \$2.95
Superman: the Kansas Sighting #1, \$6.95
Transmetropolitan: Vol. 9 the Cure TP, \$14.95
Wonder Woman #198, \$2.25

Gemstone Publishing

Donald Duck and Friends #310,

\$2.95
Mickey Mouse and Friends #259, \$2.95

Image Comics

Casefiles: Sam & Twitch #7, \$2.95
G.I. Joe Frontline #17, (two covers \$2.95)
Hawaiian Dick: the Last Resort #3, \$2.95
Heaven's War GN, \$12.95
Savage Dragon #113, \$2.95
♦ Vampire's Christmas GN, \$5.95 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Victory #3, (two covers \$2.95)

Marvel Comics

Cable and Deadpool #1, \$2.99
Captain Marvel #16, \$2.99
♦ Crew #7, \$2.99 (Nov. 2-8)
Daredevil #54, \$2.99
Doc Ock Vs. Spider-Man: Out of Reach #1, \$2.99
♦ Gun Theory #3, \$2.50 (Oct. 12-18)
Hawkeye #2, \$2.99

Hulk Gray #3, \$3.50
Incredible Hulk Vol. 2 HC, \$29.99
Namor #9, \$2.99
Namor Vol. 1: Sea and Sand TP, \$12.99
New Mutants #8, \$2.50
New X-Men #149, \$2.25
Runaways #8, \$2.99
Runaways Vol. 1: Pride and Joy TP, \$14.99
Thor #71, \$2.99
Wolverine #8, \$2.25

Oni Press

Last Exit Before Toll GN, \$9.95
Love Fights #5, \$2.99
Queen & Country #21, \$2.99

Viz

Basara Vol. 3 TP, \$9.95
Boys Over Flowers Vol. 3: Hana Yori Dango TP, \$9.95
Firefighter Daigo of Fire Company M Vol. 5, \$9.95
Tuxedo Gin Vol. 3 TP, \$9.95

NOW APPEARING!

November 15

Alex Ross (*JLA: Truth and Justice* artist), **Paul Dini** (*JLA: Truth and Justice* writer), and **Chip Kidd** (*Mythology: The DC Art of Alex Ross* designer/writer) at Lee's Comics, 1020 N. Rengstorff Ave., Suite F, Mountain View, California 94043, from 2 to 4 p.m.

November 19

Dan Hellman (*Legal Action Comics*) and **Jim Higgins** (*New Thing*) at Jim Hanley's Universe, 4 W. 33rd St., New York, New York 10001, from 5 to 8 p.m.

Gallery Showings

Oct. 18-Dec. 31

The Art of Insight Studios at True Believers Comics & Gallery, 435 S. Guadalupe, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501. Exhibit hours: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

Lecture series

Nov. 4-Dec. 2

Arlen Schumer (author of *The Silver Age of Comic Book Art*) lecturing on super-heroes of the 1960s at The Graduate Center, CUNY, 365 Fifth Ave., New York, New York 10016, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. each Tuesday evening.

IDW releases books on Heaven, Hell

Vampires return; so does *Bible* reprint collection

By Nate Melby

IDW Publishing will reach toward the spectrums of Heaven and Hell in 2004, when it continues the vampire adventures from *30 Days of Night* and *Dark Days* in a new *30 Days of Night Annual* followed by a reprint collection of *The Bible: Eden*.

Beginning in January, Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith will bring back their trademark vampires and bring

three friends along to help illustrate four new stories. Picked by Niles to illustrate his four new tales are Temple-Smith, who also drew the cover, Josh Medors, Brandon Hovet, and Szymon Kudranski.

"I love working with these up-and-coming artists," Niles said. "These stories are a little experimental, being short vampire stories in this *30 Days* universe — and the range and enthusiasm we're getting from Josh, Szymon, and Brandon is incredible."

Templesmith added, "I'm really anticipating seeing how other artists will be handling the *30 Days of Night* universe." Until this project, he has been the only artist to work on the project since the first story was published.

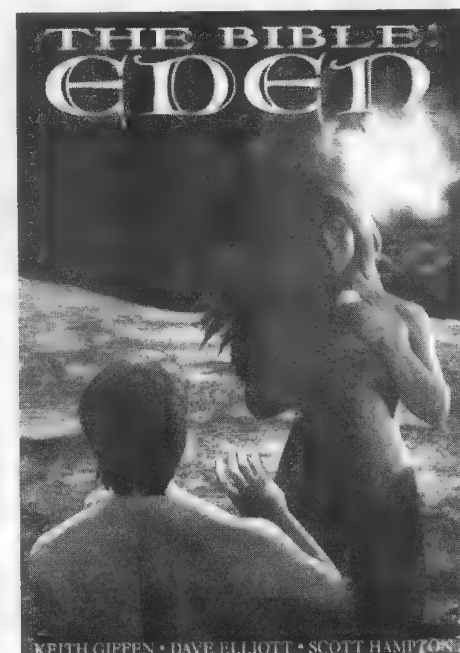
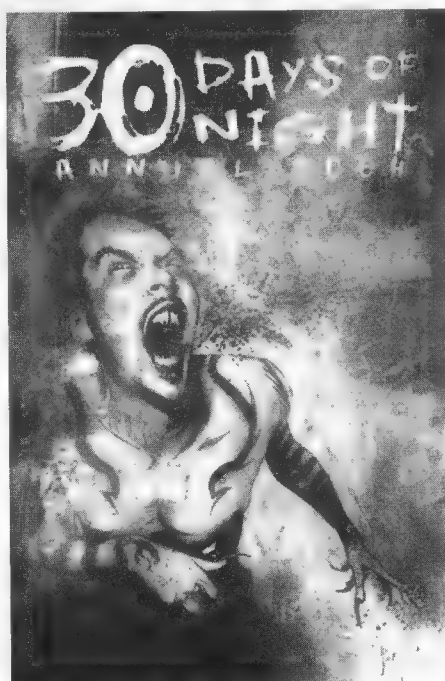
Also from IDW will come the story of the Garden of Eden as depicted by writers Keith Giffen and Dave Hampton and painted by Scott Hampton.

IDW Editor in Chief Jeff Mariotte said, "While everyone is familiar with the general story of Eden, Scott Hampton, Dave Elliott, and Keith Giffen have given the tale a few twists of their own, though fully in keeping with the original intent."

"For instance, the fact of Eve's preg-

nancy is glossed over, to a great degree, in Scripture, but this unprecedented event was surely frightening, miraculous, and fulfilling to Eve and Adam. These creators have re-imagined the world's first story and, in doing so, have produced a book sure to be treasured."

The story was originally serialized in *Penthouse* and has never been collected. The 104-page, \$21.99 oversized hardcover, is due in stores next year. ♦



CONFIRMED SHIPPING

They're out there: We have received confirmation that the following titles have shipped and should be available in stores. This reflects shipping information received through October 31:

Anarchy Studios: *Vampi Vicious* #2, (two covers \$2.99, Sp Ed \$9.95) (Aug)
Antarctic Press: *Gold Digger* #46, \$2.99 (Oct)
Junction 17 #3 (of 4), \$3.50 (Sep)
Neotopia Vol. 2 #3 (of 6), \$3.95 (Sep)
Ninja High School #110, \$3.50 (Oct)
APC: *Assassin School* #2 (of 3), \$3.50 (Aug)
Monster Club #7, \$3.50 (Jun)
Archaia Studios Press: *Artesia Afire* #4, \$3.95 (Oct)
Archie Comic Publications: *Archie's Double-Digest* #147, \$3.59 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Betty & Veronica #194, \$2.19 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Sonic The Hedgehog #129, \$2.19 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Basement Comics/Amryl Entertainment: *Mike Hoffman's Lost Worlds of Fantasy & Sci-Fi* Sp Ed #5, \$8.95 (Sep)
Blind Wolf Comics: *Patrick The*

1)
DC Comics: *21 Down* TP, \$19.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Batman/Joker Switch, \$6.95 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Batman/Superman World's Finest TP, \$19.95 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Caper #1, \$2.95 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Cartoon Cartoons #23, \$2.25 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Catwoman #24, \$2.50 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Crisis On Multiple Earths Vol. 2 TP, \$14.95 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Flash #203, \$2.25 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Green Lantern #170, \$2.25 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
JLA #89, \$2.25 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Legion #25, \$3.95 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Sgt. Rock Archives Vol. 2 HC, \$49.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Teen Titans/Outsiders Secret Flies 2003, \$5.95 (Sept. 28-Oct. 4)
Terra Obscura #5, \$2.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Digital Webbing: *Digital Webbing Presents* #11, \$2.95 (Oct. 12-18)
Dreamwave: *Shidima* Vol. 1 Complete TP, \$16.95 (Oct)
Transformers: More Than Meets Eye

Official Guide #7, \$5.25 (Oct)
Gemstone Publishing: *Uncle Scrooge* #323, \$6.95 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
1)
Walt Disney's Comics & Stories #638, \$6.95 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Girl Twirl Comics: *Jane's World* #8, \$2.95 (Nov)
Groundwood Books: *Four Pictures* GN, \$15.95 (Oct)
Gutsooni! Entertainment: *Raijin Comics* #39, \$5.95 (Nov. 2-8)
Heavy Metal Magazine: *Art of Felix Vega* HC, \$19.95 (Nov)
IDW Publishing: *Gene Pool* #1, \$6.99 (Oct)
Image Comics: *Age of Bronze* #18, \$3.50 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Noble Causes: Distant Relatives #3 (of 4), \$2.95 (Sep. 21-27)
Rex Mundi #6, \$2.95 (Sep. 7-13)
Stupid Comics #2, \$2.95 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Tomb Raider #34, \$2.99 (Sep)
Voltron: Defender of the Universe #5, \$2.95 (Sep. 21-27)
Witchblade #70, \$2.99 (Oct)
Marvel Comics: *Avengers* #72, \$2.25 (Sep. 21-27)
Crew #6, \$2.99 (Oct. 12-18)
Essential Tomb of Dracula Vol. 1 TP, \$14.99 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)

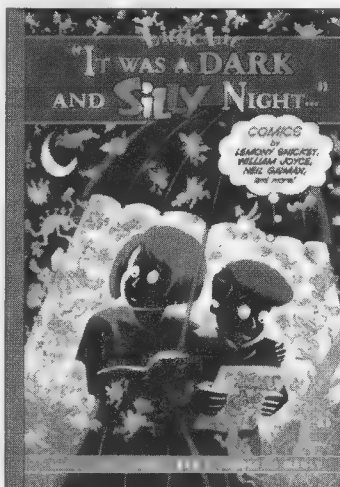
Eternal #5, \$2.99 (Sept. 28-Oct. 4)
Hulk Gray #2, \$3.50 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
1)
Marvel Mangaverse Vol. 4: *X-Men - Ronin* TP, \$13.99 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Namor #8, \$2.99 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
New Mutants #6, \$2.50 (Oct. 12-18)
Silver Surfer #2, \$2.25 (Aug. 24-30)
Thor: Vikings #4, \$3.50 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Ultimate Spider-Man Vol. 7: *Irresponsible* TP, \$12.99 (Sept. 28-Oct. 4)
Venom #7, \$2.25 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
X-Statix #14, \$2.99 (Sep. 21-27)
X-Treme X-Men #33, \$2.99 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)
Monkeysuit Press: *Rover* #2, \$3.50 (Nov)
NBM: *Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde* Vol. 1 SC, \$7.95 (Sep)
Oni Press Inc.: *Queen & Country* #19, \$2.99 (Aug. 17-23)
Rebellion: *2000 AD* #1359, \$3.75 (Nov. 2-8)
2000 AD #1360, \$3.75 (Nov. 30-Dec. 6)
Renaissance Press: *Amelia Rules: Superheroes* #1, \$2.95 (Oct)

Titan: *Slaine The King* SC, \$14.95 (Nov. 23-29)
TokyoPop: *Baby Birth* Vol. 2 GN, \$9.99 (Nov. 2-8)
Chronicles of the Cursed Sword Vol. 3 GN, \$9.99 (Nov. 2-8)
Duklyon: Clamp School Defenders Vol. 2 GN, \$9.99 (Nov. 9-15)
Fake Vol. 4 GN, \$9.99 (Nov. 2-8)
FLCL Vol. 2 GN, \$9.99 (Nov. 2-8)
Lizzie McGuire Cine-manga Vol. 3 GN, \$7.99 (Nov. 2-8)
Lupin III Vol. 9 GN, \$9.99 (Nov. 2-8)
Spongebob Squarepants Cinemanga Vol. 2 GN, \$7.99 (Nov. 9-15)
Zodiac P.I. Vol. 3 GN, \$9.99 (Nov. 2-8)
Top Shelf Productions: *Shuck Unmasked* TP, \$14.95 (Nov)
Troubletown: Axis of Trouble Vol. 1 TP, \$10.95 (Nov)
Vertical: *Tezuka's Buddha* Vol. 1 HC *Kapilavastu*, \$24.95 (Nov)
Viz: *Animerica Extra* Nov 2003 Vol. 6 #11, \$4.95 (Oct)
Animerica Nov 2003 Vol. 11 #11, \$4.95 (Oct)
Excel Saga Vol. 3 TP, \$9.95 (Oct)
Wingnut Games: *Tony Digerolamo's Travelers* #24, \$2.99 (Oct)

Advice for up-and-coming journalists

Fact-checking is easier today than it's ever been

Hero: To National Public Radio, which I'm enjoying and listening to avidly for the first time in years. Without looking too hard, you can find plenty of laudable things to say about NPR. But in the past few months, you could find a lot of nice things to say about them, if you're a comics fan. On Sept. 21, *Weekend Edition* had a great interview with Art Spiegelman — his second appearance on NPR this year — as he talked about the development of *It Was a Dark and Silly Night*, the third Little Lit book. (It's well worth grabbing: *CBG's* own *Reading Room* gave it high marks. I should know: I wrote the review.) Just three days earlier, Neil Gaiman was on *Talk of the Nation* to, um, talk about his various projects. And in August *American Splendor's* Harvey Pekar hobnobbed with Terry Gross on *Fresh Air*, too. Go to www.npr.org and poke around. You can find audio archives of most of the above, plus probably plenty that I missed.



Zero: To the *New York Times*, whose Sept. 15 coverage of Vertigo's 10th anniversary should have been a Hero winner. But writer Dana Jennings, despite being an avowed comics fan, managed to be just patronizing enough to annoy the bejabbers out of me. It all went downhill, when Jennings likened Vertigo editor Karen Berger to the smarter older sister of Betty from Archie Comics (whatever that means). Then the writer went on to insist breathlessly that Vertigo's newest offering, Neil Gaiman's long-anticipated and now best-selling *Sandman: Endless Nights*, was a "crucial marketing gambit" to garner more readers, which was just a bit too melodramatic (never mind patently untrue) for me. The *Times* can do — and has done — better than this. (Its Aug. 27 valentine to the late Jack Kirby, written by my old pal Elvis Mitchell, leaps to mind).

Hero: To the Sept. 10 issue of *Technology Review* for its nifty coverage of the new micropayment system BitPass and, more importantly for us, the generous dollop of positive comics coverage. Writer Henry Jenkins references *Understanding Comics* author Scott McCloud and his entertaining and innovative comic "The Right Number," the inaugural offering on the BitPass system. BitPass, by the by, allows Web users to view the comic book (and a growing list of others) after paying just 25¢. (You do have to sign up for a prepaid BitPass account, but it's ridiculously easy.) Yes, I know the micropayment thing is a controversial topic and I don't even want to get sucked into that. It's a good story about a neat comic. Check



By Stephen C. George

it out at www.scottmccloud.com, if you don't believe me.

Hero: To Bookslut.com, not just for having a resident comic-book slut (the excellent Karin L. Kross), but for having one who's a media watchdog, too. Her open letter to reviewers — in which she takes to task recent comics-oriented stories in the *New York Times*, *Salon* and elsewhere — was a balm to my soul. Kross doesn't want these mainstream publications to stop reviewing comics — God, no. She just wants an end to the "condescending asides" that she feels reinforce the idea that comics are still by and large unworthy of consideration. I happen to believe that, when you're writing for a mainstream audience, you sometimes have to delve into the history of comics, which sometimes includes bringing up unfortunate points that most comics fans would rather ignore. Heaven knows I've done it. But there's a big difference between historical context for the general reader and the kind of condescension Kross is rightly railing against. Way to go, Karin! My only criticism is that you had the audacity to think of posting an open letter and I didn't.

"He tells us a child in 1938 needed only 5¢ to purchase a copy of *Action Comics* #1. (Yeah, and I suppose Lupoff and Thompson edited *All in Color for a Nickel*.)"

Zero: It's been argued that I shouldn't be so hard on college journalists — "we all made mistakes when we were starting out" tends to be the point of most arguments I get. My rebuttal has always been that, without people to point out those mistakes, you're doomed to repeat them, and, the earlier in your career someone points it out, the sooner you wise up and start being more careful. Or you learn that, hey, this reporting-the-facts stuff is hard and you get the hell out of the profession. Either way, problem solved. So, as a public service to my alma mater, North-

western University, and its *Daily Northwestern* paper, I award this Zero to writer Daniel Hess. His story in the Oct. 9 issue, "Comics Evolution," was by and large a positive piece, which is fine. But his point — that comics have evolved beyond children's entertainment — is just another way of saying "comics aren't for kids any more," a headline that's been appearing in newspapers probably since before Hess was born. Enough, already!

Less forgivable, though, are the factual errors glaring enough to make comics fans wince as though they'd just received a paper cut from their favorite issue. Two lines into the story, he tells us a child in 1938 needed only 5¢ to purchase a copy of *Action Comics* #1. (Yeah, and I suppose Lupoff and Thompson edited *All in Color for a Nickel*.) By the middle of the story, he's asserting that comics have been trying to add a dash of proven literary talent by luring such writers to the field as Michael Chabon (OK, he's fine there) and best-selling novelist — Neil Gaiman. Can you say, "bassackwards"?

I realize that school papers are edited and written by students, and many staffs often toil long hours for little or no wages to put out a paper — and to try to earn a few clips to help them secure a job once they hit the so-called Real World. But young journalists aren't doing themselves any favors to submit and publish copy with retread viewpoints and these kinds of errors, especially when even the simplest Web-assisted fact-checking would have caught them. Be a little more careful next time, Dan. And that goes for your editor at the *Daily Northwestern*, too.

Hall of Fame: Once upon a time, my least favorite newspaper theme, "comics aren't just for kids any more," actually had a freshness and relevance to it. That is, until countless editors wore it — and readers' patience — to a nub by using it *ad nauseam* for the better part of 30 years. But in 1971, it was an unorthodox slant for someone as mainstream as the *New York Times Magazine* to take. And it was the cover story, no less, when Saul Braun wrote, "Shazam! Here Comes Captain Relevant" in the May 2 issue that year, complete with a reprint of a classic Joe Kubert Sgt. Rock cover right there, front and center. To see that image for yourself, catch the forthcoming book *The Silver Age of Comic Book Art* by Arlen Schumer, which my esteemed columnist colleague, Mr. Silver Age, reviewed in *CBG* #1560. ♦

Saw a story on the news, in a magazine or local newspaper? Good or bad, we want to know about it. E-mail us at: mediawatch@mchsi.com. If you can send us a legible scan of the story in question, that would be great. Or you can always drop it in the mail to: Stephen George, Media Watchdog, 2131 NW 138th St., Clive, IA 50325. If you have an audio- or videotape of a broadcast segment, e-mail me first and let's talk about it.

Media Watchdog and all contents © 2003 by Stephen C. George.

The start of Tony's comics collecting

A missed issue started a life-long passion

I think in thought bubbles, which embarrasses my wife when we go out to dinner.

— Tony Isabella

One of my favorite features in this distinguished publication is the "Question of the Week." I don't always have time to answer these queries. Sometimes, to my amazement, I don't have an answer to them, but I always read them and spend a couple minutes thinking about them, and I enjoy reading your published responses to them. If **CBG** put together a book of these questions and your answers, I'd definitely buy it.

OK, to be honest, I'd bug Managing Editor Brent Frankenhoff to send me a review copy, but my being cheap in no way diminishes my regard for this feature.

In **CBG** #1561, we were asked: "What comic book led you to collect comics for the first time? Why?"

Hey, wait a minute! That was two questions! Geez, you can't trust anyone these days.

I've often said *Fantastic Four Annual* #1 (1963) was the comic book that truly made me a comics fan. It was the comic book that made me aware creating comic books was an actual job and that it was a job I wanted. It changed my life.

However ...

It was *Amazing Spider-Man* #10 (Mar 64) that made me a comics collector — and it was because I couldn't buy the issue at my friendly neighborhood



By Tony Isabella

drug store.

My first *Amazing Spider-Man* was #9, with the first appearance (and origin) of Electro and all the soap opera elements that made Peter Parker's life as interesting as his super-heroic battles. I loved it but, at the time, I did not possess such vital collector information as when the new comics arrived at the store.

My next *Amazing Spider-Man* was #11. It was the first time I was acutely aware of missing an issue of a comic book and I wasn't going to let it happen again. I didn't know enough to ask the clerk if the previous issue had already been returned to the distributor, but I did learn from her that new comics arrived almost every Tuesday and Thursday. From then on, with exceedingly rare exception — and until the store closed during my junior year of high school — I was there every Tuesday and Thursday.

Comics had been part of my life prior to this epiphany. There was always a stack of them in the bedroom I shared with my younger brothers. But I never collected them *per se*. I'd read them, more than once usually, and then I'd trade them to other kids and even the neighborhood barber for other comic books, for baseball cards, for non-sports cards, for whatever had caught my sometimes flighty interest. They were just another youthful entertainment.

Amazing Spider-Man #10 changed that. I never missed another issue. Via card-trading with other kids and mail-order purchases, I got that issue — and all the other issues I needed to complete my runs of the various Marvel super-hero titles.

The comic book that made me a collector was the one that got away — but not for long.

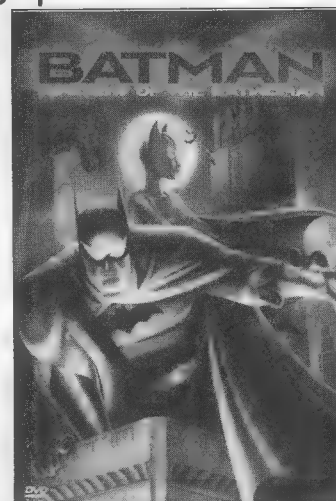
These days, I'm more of an accumulator than a collector, but I have this crazy dream that, someday, I will actually organize my vast accumulation. My plan after that is to sell what I don't want and use the proceeds to collect what I do want. It's the circle of life — sans the music.

Watching *Batman: Mystery of the Batwoman* (Warner Home Video, \$24.90) was a pleasant way to fill a hour or so on a quiet weekend. I sprung for the DVD of this direct-to-video animated feature at my local Kmart, paying just under \$20. It won't be difficult to find a better price, but, since I appreciate the store being open round the clock, I give it as much of my

business as possible.

Batwoman was loads of fun. A mysterious masked crime-fighter has appropriated Batman's style to stop the plasma gun-running operation of The Penguin, Rupert Thorne, and Carlton Duquesne. The Batman isn't happy about the motif infringement.

Writers Alan Burnett (story) and Michael Reaves came up with an exciting ad-



venture in a somewhat lighter tone than we normally get with Batman. They play fair with the mystery of the Batwoman's identity — which I figured out early on — but never make that the sole thrust of the story. Beyond the mystery and its revelation, there are terrific action sequences and character bits. After the reveal, there is still plenty of story left.

I don't want to resort to spoilers in this review, but I will say that Bruce Wayne, usually the forgotten man of Batman stories, gets plenty of welcome screen time and gets to interact with all of the suspects, as fascinating and lovely a collection of co-stars as a leading man could ask for. And, as usual, faithful butler Alfred gets the best line.

Notable vocal performances include Kevin Conroy as the Batman and the Bruce Wayne, Efrem Zimbalist Jr. as Alfred, David Ogden Stiers as The Penguin, Kimberly Brooks and Kelly Ripa as two of the suspects, and singer Cherie, who performs a catchy number in the scene set at the Penguin's nightclub.

Directed by Curt Geda, the feature doesn't represent a quantum leap forward in animation from the television Batman cartoons, but the animation is of high quality with great work on the characters and their expressions. Adding to the mood and the motion is a fine musical score. An online critic opined that, if this feature had been a live-action Batman movie, the fans would rank it as one of the best in the series. I agree.

Included on the DVD are the usual entertaining bonus features and "Chase Me," a new five-minute cartoon starring Batman and The Catwoman. Written by Paul Dini and Burnett and told without dialogue, it's nothing short of brilliant. I hope this short plays theatrically because it deserves a shot at the Oscar.

Batman: Mystery of the Batwoman would've received a good rating all by its lonesome. However, with the addition of "Chase Me," it earns the full five  Tonys. Don't miss it!

An ambitious young priest conjures up a demon in *Liberty from Hell* #1 (Radio Comix, \$2.99), a "mature readers" title by Christina Hanson, Baron Engel, and Richard Becker. The credits don't make it clear





who does what, but Becker did sign the cover.

The demon is fallen angel Phalloide, who chose not to choose a side when Lucifer split from the Almighty and so was condemned to Hell. Phalloide is all about the pleasures of the flesh, but his good heart may earn him some mercy, now that he's been released into our world and a variety of borrowed bodies.

On the plus side, I like the theme (redemption) of this series and the writing. On the minus side, while I don't dislike the art, I think the artist(s) need work differentiating among characters and setting/staging the scenes better. It's not always immediately clear who is who.

Set in the year 575, *Liberty from Hell* shows promise and might interest readers who enjoy medieval fantasy. It gets a respectable three Tonys from this reader — who isn't a fan of that particular genre. If you can't find it at a comics shop, go to www.radiocomix.com.   

Black Rust (NBM, \$18.95) wraps a semi-story around the digital fantasy art of Chad Michael Ward. Since many images are of nude men and women — mostly women — and many of those men and women have had their bodies disfigured in one manner or another, you would do well to heed the "for mature readers" warning.

On one level, I'm impressed by Ward's obvious talent and the attempt to create stories around his decadent and grotesque images. On another, I'm bored by a vision that screams, "I'm edgy, I'm hip, I'm tomorrow," more than it actually achieves any of

that. Ward has his fans, Timothy Bradstreet and Warren Ellis among them, but his work didn't strike me as either meaningful or memorable. Mileage eternally varies, which is one of the things that makes art and the quest to achieve art so dangerous and exciting.

Black Rust gets two Tonys for taking the risk and not backing down from the challenge.  

www.nbmpublishing.com.

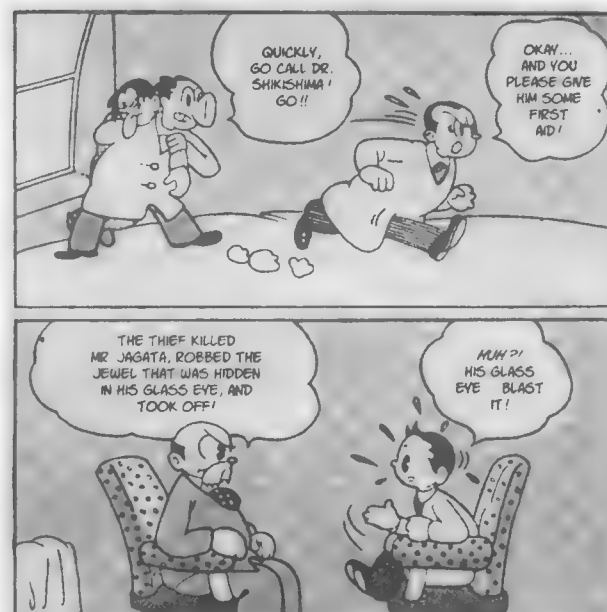
My taste in art runs more towards the works to be found in the expanded and updated **Vertigo Visions** from Watson-Guptill (\$24.95).

Edited by former Vertigo editor and writer Alisa Kwitney, the book collects 199 images. Some are frightening, some are breathtakingly beautiful, and all are thoughtful. This is the kind of collection you leave within easy reach, the better to spend stolen minutes in contemplation of this or that painting.

Vertigo Visions would be a wonderful holiday gift for writers and artists alike. From the secret nook inside my writer's brain, I have been "exercising" my creative chops by concentrating on the paintings and coming up with my own stories around them. Not only is it a fun way to stretch my thoughts, but I may even be able to turn some of these workouts into stories. Any book I can get this much use out of      deserves the full five Tonys.

www.watsonguptill.com.

Dark Horse Comics has been performing a service to comics fans and historians with its English-language editions of the legendary works of the equally leg-



endary Osamu Tezuka. This time out, from 1949, we get **The Lost World** (\$17.95), an often schizophrenic SF and suspense thriller of a rogue planet coming within range of Earth for the first time in centuries — and the perils and treasures it holds for those brave enough to meet it.

The first half of *The Lost World* is a struggle among groups of scientists, good and evil, for the power stones that will allow a rocket to travel to the approaching planet. The second half of the book takes readers to the planet where the ultimate destinies of its protagonists will be decided.

Despite the animated style of the art and a talking animal or three, *The Lost World* is not a story for younger readers. The violence featured in the tale borders on the brutal and has serious consequences for those involved in it. I wouldn't give the book to any child under the age of 10.

What's good about *The Lost World* is Tezuka's frenzied action, intriguing characters — including a pair of sentient plants in human form — and the twists and turns of allegiances and fortunes, as the book barrels towards its conclusion.

What's not so good about *The Lost World* is that a few of the fights and expository scenes run too long, that its large cast is sometimes difficult to keep track of, and that its original editors made changes to the story — retained for this edition — that took some of the heart out of it. On a purely bang-for-your-bucks basis, I think 18 bucks is too much for the 240 or so pages of story and text material contained herein.

The Lost World is far from Tezuka's best, but, if you're one of his many fans, you'll want to at least check it out. I give it three    Tonys.

www.darkhorse.com.

We're mere weeks away from Mid-Ohio-Con and the final stop on my official Tony Isabella Farewell Tour. I hope to see you there. You'll find everything you need to know about the show, its panel presentations, and its guests by going to www.midohiocon.com.

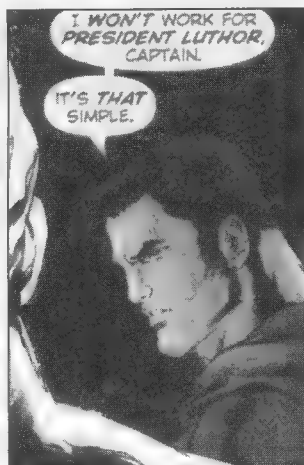
I'll have some Mid-Ohio-Con thoughts for you in my next *Tony's Tips* column, along with the usual reviews.

Tony's Tips is © 2003 Tony Isabella. Comments on this column or review items for future columns should be sent to Tony at: *Tony's Tips*, P.O. Box 1502, Medina, OH 44258. You can also e-mail Tony at: tonyisa@ohio.net.

Superman/Batman Secret Files 2003 DC

\$4.95, color, 48 pgs., available now
Writers: Geoff Johns, Jeremy Johns, Mark Waid, Jeph Loeb, Mike McAvennie, Scott Beatty; Artists: Ivan Reis, Renato Guedes, Tim Sale, Ed McGuinness, Scott McDaniel
reviewed by **Brett Weiss**

Even though the lead story by Geoff Johns and his brother Jeremy ends on a cliffhanger of sorts (to be continued in *Superman/Batman*), this installment of *Secret Files* works pretty well as a stand-alone comic book. The lead story in question provides exciting battle scenes featuring a big, burly Major Force, it recaps Captain Atom's origin, and it makes overall good use of Cap, especially regarding a fundamental difference with Superman. Unlike The Man of Steel, who lives to serve the people, The Silvery Sultan is basically a lackey for the state.



Other stories in this star-studded issue include a look by Mark Waid at a young Lex Luthor's irreverent intelligence and a touching two-pager by Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale involving a chance boyhood encounter between Clark Kent and Bruce Wayne.

Character bios, which are fun and breezy (Krypto is described as having "powers and senses far beyond those of mortal mutts"), repeat the oft-told tales of Batman and Superman, but also provide updated information on Lex Luthor, Talia, Metallo, and others. This is nice reference material, especially for new readers.

S/B Secret Files

PRO Neat bios, insightful stories.
CON Kinda pricey.

GRADE: B+

The only quibble is with Ed McGuinness' anime-influenced renderings on the bios of Batman and Superman. The art is certainly stylish, but it's hard getting used to seeing these American icons drawn in such a fashion (no matter how often it is done), especially for those of us who were weaned on Curt Swan (Superman) and Neal Adams (Batman).

www.dccomics.com

Full Metal Panic ADV Manga

\$9.99, b/w, 168 pgs., available now
Writer: Shouji Gatou; Artist: Retsu Tateo
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett**

Standard cute high-school girl Kaname is being protected and/or stalked by a Sosuke, an exchange student from some unspecified "war zone" — which is supposed to explain away his extreme attitude towards



school safety. Of course, he's really a member of the "stealth anti-terrorist organization" Mithril, which believes Kaname has been targeted for kidnapping by unnamed terrorists. And, since they don't show up in Vol. 1, instead of a manga replay of the movie *The Bodyguard*, Sosuke's blazing guns

and no-nonsense attitude comes up against a usual suspect list of Japanese high-school characters and situations with mostly limp results. The major problem, besides the generic title that sounds like a videogame, is there just isn't much comedy in this supposed action-comedy. It doesn't help that the bland Kaname refuses to believe she's in any danger, so Sosuke comes off as a mentally disturbed stalker who's allowed to take guns to school. Hardly most folks' idea of a good time.

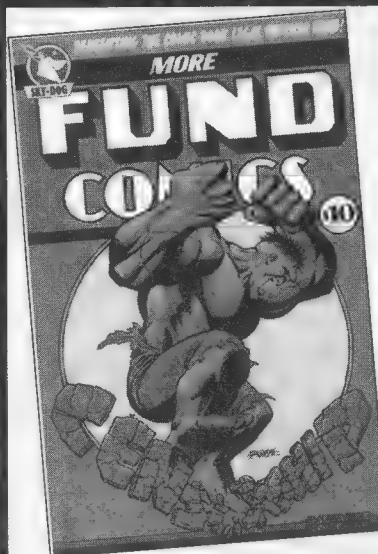
www.adv-manga.com

Full Metal Panic

PRO Kaname.
CON Guns in school.

GRADE: B

PICK OF THE WEEK



More Fund Comics

Sky Dog Press

\$10, b/w, 192 pgs., available now

Writers and artists: Various

he problem with many anthologies is the "gems to garbage" ratio. Happily, *More Fund Comics*, an anthology to benefit the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, boasts a much higher percentage of gems than most.

One might expect that an anti-censorship benefit book would be chock full of pieces decrying the curtailment of free speech. Were that the case, it might get preachy after a while. The balance of stories in *More Fund* is dead-on. Most pieces do not address censorship or free speech; they're just good comics. Then, along comes a piece like Marty Baumann's "The Yarnog Tree" to remind readers why they're there.

Creators include Art Adams, Stan Sakai, Erik Larsen, and Michael T. Gilbert. To celebrate the pure joy of reading, don't miss "Worlds of Wonder" by Ron Marz and Brandon Peterson. There is a largely unexceptional pin-up section, but John Romita's take on Hagar the Horrible is a winner.

Even if it weren't to benefit such a worthy cause, *More Fund Comics* is more than worth the surprisingly low cover price. You will benefit more than the CBLDF with this purchase; you'll benefit yourself.

reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz**
www.skydogcomics.com

More Fund Comics

PRO The CBLDF.
CON Censorship.

GRADE: A

Madburger! Comics Questioning Sanity Forum Ljubljana

\$16.95, b/w, 216 pgs., available now

Writers and artists: Various
reviewed by **Jim Johnson**

It's madness. Sheer madness. That's not a criticism, *per se*; that's coming right up.

No, madness is the stated theme that runs through this anthology from the same publisher as the previous *XXX(Strip)Burger* and *Miniburger* volumes. And it's maddening, all right.

Anthologies in general already are less desirable in a market dominated by graphic novels and serialized stories.

Add the fact that the contributors for this particular effort are mostly unfamiliar small-press creators from Europe, and the result is a mix that will probably chase away most of the potential North American audience.

And the hearty, well-meaning fans who purchase on faith will likely lose theirs before the finish, for most stories in this volume are incomprehensible, both literarily and artistically.

The seven or so readers who haven't been sifted out by book's end, though, will at least receive a consolation prize for their perseverance.

Vladan Nikolic's "Messiah" is a Kafka-esque tale of preaching non-conformity, and Madison Clell's relatively lengthy "Multiples and Their Siblings" features two sisters who drift apart as the outlook of one begins to change.

The nuggets are few but just numerous enough to keep the reader strung along. Now, that's maddening.

www.ljudmila.org/stripcore/com.htm
ISBN 961-90436-9-34

Madburger

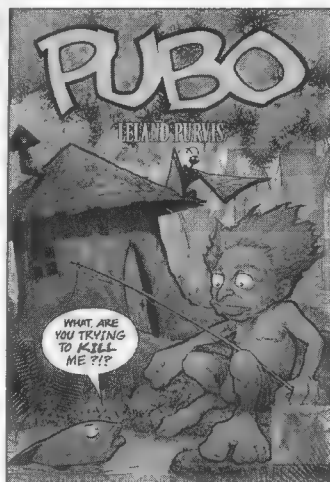
PRO Some gems among the rocks.
CON Some, but not enough.

GRADE: D+



Pubo TPB
Dark Horse

\$9.95, b/w, 96 pgs., available now
 Writer and artist: Leland Purvis
 reviewed by **Oliver Chin**

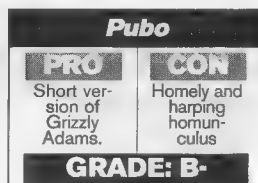


Like the funny-looking extraterrestrial from the Disney movie *Lilo and Stitch*, Pubo is the product of a scientific experiment gone awry. Left with an out-of-proportion body and desire for his own freedom, Pubo escapes from his captors. Bailing out of a plane is just the beginning of his adventures; he must learn how to survive in the forest below.

But this grumpy dwarf isn't alone. Creatures large and small give him advice. Pubo brashly rubs the wise old man of the woods the wrong way and gets on the wrong side of the local grizzly bear. Moreover, he must evade the two men in black who need to recapture their AWOL test subject for their angry boss.

In this collection of the three-issue mini-series, Purvis, a native of the Pacific Northwest, exhibits a promising flair for characters' expressions and surrounding scenery. However, his depiction of perspective sometimes comes up short, and his narrative doesn't really get off the ground, once Pubo lands on his feet. Cocky and irritating, Pubo may have an interesting backstory yet to tell. But, as it stands, this introduction is incomplete without it.

www.darkhorse.com


The Courageous Princess HC Antarctic Press

\$24.95, color, 236 pgs., available now
 Writer and artist: Rod Espinosa
 reviewed by **Joyce Greenholdt**

In a world of fairytale kingdoms, Princess Mabelrose has a happy childhood, with loving parents and good friends in one of the smallest and poorest of The Hundred Kingdoms. But, contrary to the standards of fairytales, her first ball is a disaster: She's ignored by the prince and mocked by her fellow princesses. To make things worse, the next day she's carried off by a powerful and evil dragon who's already killed any number of knights and princes who tried to rescue his previous captives. Rather than give up hope, Mabel-

rose decides that, if she can't expect help to reach her in the dragon's stronghold, she'll have to rescue herself. So, in the best tradition of fairy-tale heroes, she sets out to find her own way in the world, meeting both new friends and perils, as she tries to find her way home.

Creator Rob Espinosa's deft work with pen and paintbrush (showing some manga influence), plotting, character creation, and scripting combine into one great storytelling experience. Reading the hardcover collection of the original three softcover graphic novels is a bit like going to one of the better Disney animated films, except that no one spontaneously breaks into song. There's only one drawback, in fact: While the book comes to a satisfactory conclusion, it's plain that the story isn't entirely finished. Readers can only hope that Espinosa gets a chance to tell us what happens to Mabelrose and her friends next — preferably in the very near future.


Courageous Princess

PRO
 Lovely painted art, great story.

CON
 Where's Part Two #1?

GRADE: A

www.antarctic-press.com
 ISBN 0-9728978-6-0

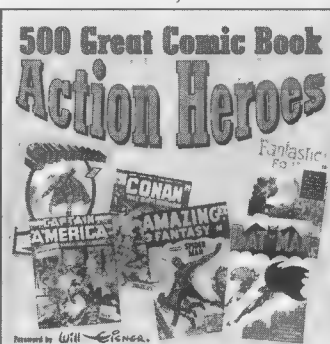
500 Great Comic Book Action Heroes Barron's Educational Series, Inc.

\$18.95, color, 376 pgs., available now
 Writer: Mike Conroy
 reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz**

This volume looks impressive and it's from a really reputable publisher of education books, but that only serves to make it a greater disappointment.

For starters, the authors have a liberal interpretation of "great." Aztek? Black Hood III and IV? Are The Crusaders, a parody of The Freedom Fighters from *Invaders* #14-15, really "great"?

Between alphabetic entries, one will find more in-depth articles dealing with characters and topics of greater significance.



SERIES SPOTLIGHT


Smax #1-3
DC/ABC

\$2.95@, color, 32 pgs. @, available now
 Writer: Alan Moore; Artist: Zander Cannon

The history of *Top 10* police officer Jeff Smax has been hinted at throughout that series' run, and now co-creators Alan Moore and Zander Cannon take readers on a five-issue exploration of Smax's fantasy dimension.

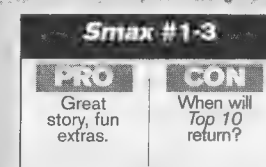
In this story, Jeff gets word that one of his relatives has died and he has to return to his home dimension for the funeral. The stoic investigator asks his female partner, Robyn, to accompany him, and she jumps at the opportunity to learn more about Jeff's world.

While Jeff downplays his world's significance, describing it as a backwater, Robyn is fascinated at the thoughts of what a fantasy realm could hold. And that's where Moore turns his storytelling ability loose, taking familiar fairytales and extending them to their logical conclusions. The dimensional transport is a cauldron run by a trio of witches, and the hotel where Smax and Robyn spend their first night has a stack of mattresses for Robyn to sleep on but there's a pea under the bottom one. That's just two examples.

Cannon has as much fun, peppering the landscape with all sorts of extra bits of business, including a certain bear of very little brain stuck firmly into the hillside. Whether all of these were suggested by Moore is uncredited, but whoever decided on what to have in the background is to be commended for giving readers that something extra.

The story evolves from a simple funeral into a quest by Smax, the dimension's resident dragon-slayer, to slay the dragon that drove him out of the dimension in the first place. The story is engaging and draws readers back for more.

Brent Frankenhoff



READING ROOM REPORT CARD

From CBG #1564 and #1565

Cursed #1 C
Disney Princess: Ess. Guide B-
Drawing on Your Nightmares B
Eclipse and Vega #1 C
Exiles #35 C+
Gobler Toys: Fun We Can't Remember A+
Knuckles the Malevolent Nun C
The Life Eaters A+

Manga Mania Villains C
Mickey Mouse & Friends #257 B
Nextworld B
Patrick the Wolf Boy Wedding Sp. A-
The Punisher #33 B+
Ruse #23 A
The Sandman: Endless Nights A
Shuck Unmasked B
Suicide Blonde Book 1 C

Super-Hero Happy Hour #1-3 B+
Thanos #1 B
Transformers: G.I. Joe #1 C+
Treehouse of Horror #9 A
Two-Step #1 A
Venture #4 B+
Voltron #0-4 C+
World's Best Comics Sampler A-

COMICS GUIDE

By Maggie Thompson

ElfQuest: Wolfrider, Vol. 1

DC



Wendy Pini, Richard Pini, Mercedes Lackey, Andy Mangels, Brandon McKinney, Charles Barnett III, Chnsty Marx, Jeff Zugale, Wendi Lee, Terry Beatty, Sarah Byam, Ric Estrada, black & white, 192 pgs., ISBN 1-4012-0131-8, \$9.95, available now.

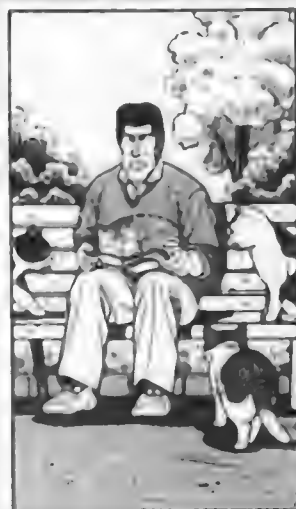
It was the Spring 1978 (and only) issue of *Fantasy Quarterly* when Richard and Wendy Pini introduced Elfquest to comics fans. With the next issue, a year later, they moved to self-publishing and began creation of an empire that crossed genres. Cutter was an elf who was a departure from the stereotype of sweetly ethereal leaf-perchers, and his band of fiercely capable wolf-riders quickly developed a devoted following. Its fans had reason for their devotion: Clear storytelling of an epic fantasy adventure on another world deserved to earn

the admiration of a variety of fantasy fans. Intriguingly, the series has garnered few awards because it's such a successful crossover; it has created its own niche. This volume sets the stage for an Elfquest library and the timeline it provides is clear and coherent. It's the first time the project has been tailored to appeal to potential readers who are attracted to comics by manga, though it's a logical extension of the appeal of the project. This anthology clearly places its reprinted stories in the continuum of the established overall timeline, identifies its characters and concept, and moves on from there. Excellent. www.dccomics.com



What's Michael? Vol. VIII: Show Time

Dark Horse



Makoto Kobayashi, Dana Lewis, Lea Hernandez, Toren Smith, black & white, 88 pgs., ISBN 1-56971-972-1, \$8.95, available now.

The *What's Michael?* library is a sure-fire winner for fans of (1) non super-hero comics, (2) real life comedy, (3) Done in One storytelling, and (4) cats. While on the surface those may seem to limit the series' appeal, they expand the potential audience far, far beyond the small universe of comics fans. It's an outreach series, and the fact that it's been lauded primarily within the world of comics means it's a safe bet for gift-giving this year. There have been samples in Dark Horse's *Super Manga Blast* — but not all the contents of that anthology are guaranteed to please the audience for Makoto Kobayashi's triumph. Sadly, only the last three volumes of the collected short-story strip are available (and eBay offers slim pickings for back issues) but they are "must-buys" for the suggested audience. Michael is *not* a cute middle kitten, he's a true feline, catbox habit and all, albeit with an occasional brief fantasy existence. Don't miss this while it's in print. www.darkhorse.com

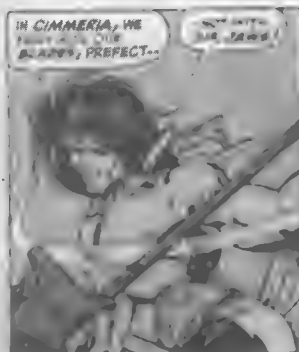


The Chronicles of Conan Vol. 1

Dark Horse

Roy Thomas, Barry Windsor-Smith, Dan Adkins, Sai Buscema, Giacoia, Tom Sutton, Tom Palmer, color, 168 pgs., ISBN 1-59307-016-0, \$15.95, available now.

The cover date on the first issue of *Conan the Barbarian* was October 1970, but what was a major move for Marvel involved many preliminaries — which Thomas discusses in a fascinating afterword. The book contains the stories of the first eight issues from Marvel, adapting the stories and concepts of Conan's creator, Robert E. Howard (1906-1936). The barbarian warrior in a world of swords and sorcery was basically a fresh figure in the comic-book field of the time, and it was due to the excellence of the combination of Thomas' writing and Windsor-Smith's art that sold fans on the concept. The Marvel version (below left) has been revamped (below right) by Digital Chameleon artists



for this new collection, adding contrasts and highlights to the relatively flat tones of the first editions. At times, this excessively darkens the pictures — but that's a minor complaint for a rewarding, recommended package made even better by Thomas' perspective on the volume's contents. What about those contents? They're entertaining to this day; a four-color form for the adventures of a primitive hero fighting to survive in a world filled with menaces both natural and unnatural. The best story? Probably "The Tower of the Elephant," beautifully adapted to the form. Do not miss this. www.darkhorse.com

These articles are listed in the table of contents. The characters that appear in the rank-and-file entries are not, nor is there any index.

The volume probably contains lots of well-researched data, but the minor shortcomings start to pile up fast. Among them, in no particular order:

- Those heroes discussed in articles have no blurbs, so there is no entry for Ant-Man, Flash, Teen Titans, or the original Captain Marvel (although there is for Green Lantern, for some reason). They are not cross-referenced, so the blurb for Ant-Man II, for example, doesn't refer readers to the Hank Pym article.

- The article on stretchable heroes is two pages on Plastic Man concluded by one paragraph naming a few others. And Mr. Fantastic isn't even among them!

- The Fawcett heroes weren't members of the All-Star Squadron.

- Black Canary III isn't a separate character; she's Black Canary II with a revised origin.

- Why is The Authority's entry twice as long as that for The Avengers?

There's more. Each one is a minor flaw and probably would not mar too greatly a reader's enjoyment in perusing a section of the volume. Cumulatively, they erode, not only one's enjoyment of the book, but one's confidence in it.

500 Great Action Heroes	
PRO Looks great	CON Too numerous to overlook
GRADE: D	

H-E-R-O #9

DC

\$2.50, color, 22 story pgs., available now

Writer: Will Pfeifer; Artist: Kano
reviewed by Nate Melby



H-E-R-O is setting the standard for comics series that continue to get better with each issue.

The story revolves around a dial that gives the user a random super-power when the word "hero" is typed in.

This time, the dial has found its way to Gotham City and into the hands of a wannabe criminal. But, as is the case with every other criminal in Gotham,

things never work quite right. What makes this story stand out is that its characters continue to change. There is no central hero or figure: just the dial, as writer Pfeifer passes it flawlessly from one hand to another.

Pfeifer's script and Kano's art bring a kind of hipness to the title that makes the reader feel as if he is in on something that everyone else should know about. Despite that, the storylines aren't out of date, as they so often are in comics in which the writer tries to make a hip reference about a hot new topic but fails to realize that it has been old news for a year or more.

If there is one complaint to make concerning *H-E-R-O* #9, it is the ongoing backstory featuring a group

of inmates who obviously had been in possession of the dial at one time and are hoping to get it back. The plot thread simply clutters up the stronger aspects of the plot, which involve the dial and the powers it gives its owner. Stick with the good stuff, guys!

www.dccomics.com

Amazing Spider-Man #500 Marvel

\$3.50, color, 48 pgs., available now
 Writer: J. Michael Straczynski
 Artists: John Romita Jr., John Romita Sr.
 reviewed by **Brett Weiss**

The Arachnid Avenger is lost in the timestream and has the chance to alter certain key moments of his past and future life, including the fateful moment that gave him his spider-powers. Nothing really significant comes of this as far as future Spidey adventures are concerned, but readers *do* get to see Romita Jr.'s marvelous (so to speak) take on a variety of fights and other scenes from Spidey's 40-year history, and there's a villain-stuffed two-pager that would make a fantastic poster or puzzle.



H-E-R-O #9	
PRO Awesome concept.	CON Backstory.
GRADE: A-	

Another nice thing about this issue is the use of Doctor Strange. Straczynski, who has a *Doctor Strange* mini-series in the works, makes the character accessible and even a little humorous, giving fans of the mystical Stan Lee-Steve Ditko creation reason to be excited about the forthcoming project.

Although it's not a Done in One story, this *faux* anniversary issue (it's actually #59 of *Amazing* Vol. 2, since Marvel restarted the series several years ago) is easy to get into and ends on a heartening (if inconsequential) note. The finale is sweet without being overly corny (it's not quite *The Family Circus*, but it's close), Romita Sr.'s classic style fits the upbeat scenario perfectly, and the change in artists (from Jr. to Sr.) near the end goes right along with the flow and mood of the storyline.

www.marvel.com

Digiko's Champion Cup Theater Studio Ironcat

\$10.95, b/w (four pgs. in color), 148 pgs., available now
 Writer and artist: Koge-Donbo
 reviewed by **S.A. Bennett**

This handsomely designed (if smaller and thinner) volume of manga deals with the adventures of the real-world company mascot, Di Gi Charat, also known as Digiko. She's just your average would-be actress, generic manga catgirl (with the oversized mitten-paws and goiter-like bell around her neck to prove it) and register monkey at the store, Gamerz. In her off-time she's chasing the dream while dealing with the dread Black Gema Gema Gang — who are nearly as dangerous as Team Rocket.

Even with a high tolerance for cute, watching these super-deformed characters pointlessly wander around tiny panels will be one hard slog. And, although theoretically translated into English, its "jokes" go nowhere, and lettering shifts between two small, difficult-to-read fonts. It's clearly not intended for those newly initiated into manga but, rather, hard-core fans — who might like it better than I do.

www.ironcat.com

Amazing Spider-Man #500	
PRO Romita and Romita.	CON No real changes.
GRADE: B	

Champion Cup Theater	
PRO Production design.	CON Gema, Upside Down Balloon/Head
GRADE: C	

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Trigun Vol. 1 TPB Dark Horse

\$14.95, b/w, 360 pgs., available now

Writer and artist: Yasuhiro Nightow

reviewed by **Oliver Chin**

Wanted dead or alive, Vash the Stampede has a bounty on his head: \$60 billion "double" dollars. Meryl Stryfe and Millie Thompson of the Bernardelli Insurance follow "The Humanoid Typhoon" to minimize the claims for property damage left in his wake.

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of himself. Can Vash keep his promise, as he is confronted by bandits of all stripes, such as the maniacal Nebraska brothers, trigger-happy train hijackers, and greedy claim jumpers?

Published in the "right to left"-reading Japanese format, Yasuhiro Nightow's manga will be bought by fans of the popular anime from Pioneer. As a post-apocalyptic Western, *Trigun* seems to defy the limits of both genre and convention.

Mixing comedy and drama, the comic book is looser, harder to follow, and rougher around the edges than its animated counterpart. But this introductory chunk is big enough to satisfy those who have wanted to experience the original storyline for themselves.

www.darkhorse.com

Trigun Vol. 1

PRO Duels in the Wild West.	CON Confusing dust-ups.
---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

GRADE: A-

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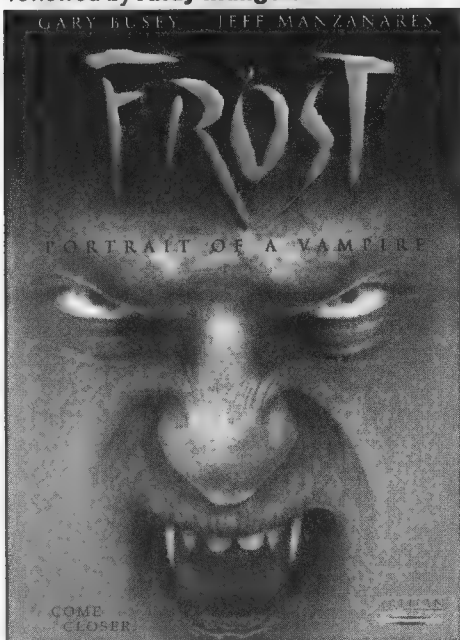
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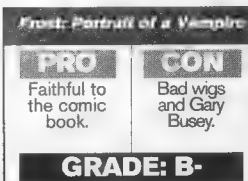


A group of mercenaries in the Middle East are shocked, when one of them is bitten by a blood-drinking local. The mercenary leader, "Jack" Frost (Jeff Manzanares), returns to America, forsaking violence for art galleries (and occasional thieving jobs). His best friend, the bitten Nat McKenzie (Charles Lister), stays with the mercs until a deadly double-cross in Mexico kick-starts his vampiric powers. When McKenzie returns to San Diego, Frost finds that he must face his compatriot in battle before the women close to them become vampire *hors d'oeuvres*.

Kevin VanHook adapted his own 1987 *Jack Frost* comic-book series from Amazing Comics (Caliber published later issues), serving here as writer, director, editor, digital effects artist, and even lyricist. Filmed over the course of several years, *Frost* is uneven in both tone and appearance. Action sequences with the mercenaries are nicely handled, as is the Mexican rampage of vampire McKenzie, but the climactic battle at the end is disappointingly flat.

Manzanares is the spitting image of VanHook's character, and he walks the fine line of his character well; as an emotionally repressed character who wears sunglasses 90% of the time, he could have been a bore to watch, but he isn't. Lister has great fun in his role, though there are moments that his bad wig takes the focus away from his dangerous energy. Gary Busey has a series of useless cameo appearances, doing the "creepy Busey" schtick.

Released direct to video and DVD, *Frost* is worth the price for vampire fans and those who like comic book adaptations. Mike Vosburg and Gene Colan did storyboards (some of which are



NOW ON VIDEO



The Hulk DVD

Universal Studios

\$26.98, 138 mins., available now

Chalk up another misguided film adaptation to the "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" pile. Criticized for his annoying "split-screen" interpretation of the comic-book-reading experience, Ang Lee's bigger mistake is his laboriously boring reworking of *The Hulk's* origin. However, not only does it fail to be more convincing, his explanation (genetic mumbo-jumbo doused with touchy-feely repressed memories and trauma) is quickly forgotten,

when *The Hulk* finally appears to smash everything within arm's reach.

Persecuted by the military-industrial complex and lacking a worthy villain (instead, viewers get an empty victory over a greedy corporate technologist, then an Oedipal bout with mad scientist father Nick Nolte), *The Hulk* never justifies why he should be considered a hero. Neither does Banner, since the charisma-deprived Eric Bana (Bruce) generates absolute zero chemistry with the uncomfortably gaunt Jennifer Connelly (Betty Ross).

Fixating on special effects, Ang Lee makes *The Green Goliath* a mute mass of muscle and overlooks the essential quality that made him such an endearing character. His primitive articulation of right vs. wrong made his physical strength that much more powerful. Lou Ferrigno can rest easy, since most folks would rather watch the TV show than this movie again.

reviewed by **Oliver Chin**

www.thehulk.com

The Hulk DVD

PRO Some boffo bashing.
CON Story sinks before it starts.

GRADE: C

shown in the DVD extras), and other comics creators are thanked in the credits. The DVD has an enjoyable commentary track, special-effects featurettes, a deleted scene, and more.

www.artisanent.com

L/R: Licensed by Royalty DVD Pioneer

\$29.98, 100 mins., available now

reviewed by **Oliver Chin**

It's *I Spy* James Bond style, as Jack Hofner and Rowe Rickenbacker embark on covert operations for her majesty's secret service called Cloud7. The running gag is the confusion others have over which man is "L" and which is "R." One is a dapper Dan and the other a slacker Sam, but their combined talents are defending the honor of queen and country.



In these introductory escapades, L/R foil a scheme to steal museum artifacts aboard a dirigible, lock horns with the

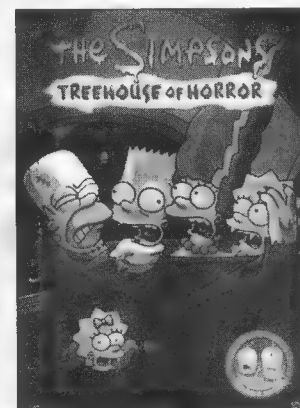
criminal organization Hornet (planning a surprise attack on the government), chapter one a teen-ager who could be a princess, and compete against rival agents to find a hidden treasure in the desert.

Odd-couple partners are a trusty cops 'n' robbers plot device. The viewer doesn't get intimate with the history or character of either L or R, but the duo proves affable and deft enough to keep the action moving. Smoothly changing speeds between *Lupin the Third* and *Cowboy Bebop*, they have a penchant for more mirth than mayhem.

www.pioneeranimation.com

Treehouse of Horror DVD 20th Cent. Fox

\$14.96, color, 92 mins., available now
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz**

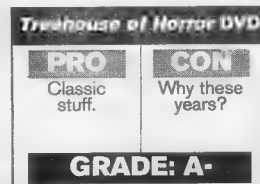


Here we have four years' worth of Simpsons Halloween specials: "Treehouse of Horror" V, VI, VII, and XII. These episodes contain classic "Treehouse" moments. Each year's installment contains three vignettes. Among the highlights: V includes Homer's time-travel escapades à la Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder." VI features Homer's 3-D adventures in a pastiche of *The Twilight Zone* episode "Little Girl Lost." In VII, Lisa creates a miniature civilization as in Theodore Sturgeon's "Microcosmic God." And, of course, XII includes the obligatory Harry Potter parody.

Why these episodes specifically were chosen is a mystery. Why not release "Treehouse Volume I" with Episodes I-IV? Why not a "Best of" with selected portions from many years? Whatever the case, *The Simpsons* has more than enough material to release subsequent collections.

The menu is a little difficult to navigate at first, but you'll get the hang of it quickly enough. The only special feature is a "Kang and Kodos" clip show, but so many of the clips come from the same episode, they might as well have just included it as a bonus episode.

www.foxhomevideo.com



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BACK ISSUES

CBG's weekly
nostalgia
celebration!

"At CBG, we recognize that the classic comics of yesteryear are why most of us got into comics in the first place. It's our mission to celebrate those comics by reminding you of great characters and stories, presenting insights into what creators had in mind, and searching out affordable reprints!"

Sharing EYKIWs

They may not know how to pronounce it, but The Captain's readers have their opinions about Everything You Know is Wrong.

Dear Captain, Page 32

The creators, characters, and series people are STILL talking about today!

FLASHBACK

15 years ago

In November 1988, Pocket Comics Publisher **Mario Brunai** announced his company had ceased publication of the *Mars Attacks* mini-comic-book series. "There will be no box series #3, issues 5 and 6," he said. "Hindsight is 20/20. Maybe my original idea for a full-size comic-book-format Mars Attacks trilogy in full color would have gone over better."

20 years ago

Walter Simonson took over as writer and artist on Marvel's *Thor* with #337 (Nov 83); the issue, which introduced Beta Ray Bill as Thor, was an immediate sell-out.

The New Defenders appeared in Marvel's double-sized *Defenders* #125 (Nov. 83).

40 years ago

The Lizard first appeared in *Amazing Spider-Man* #6 (Nov 63), written by **Stan Lee** and drawn by **Steve Ditko**.

The *Doctor Who* TV series began on the BBC in Britain Nov. 23, 1963, starring **William Hartnell** as The Doctor.

Nightgirl and Polar Boy first showed up in DC's *Adventure Comics* #306 (Nov 63).

50 years ago

Writer-artist **Tom Lyle** was born Nov. 2, 1953.

A five-page article in *Ladies Home Journal* for Nov 53 was "What Parents Don't Know about Comic Books." The material was one of a number of articles by **Fredric Wertham, M.D.** to suggest there was a need for comic-book censorship.

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Two images started *Mother, Come Home*

Hornschemeier takes story of loss to Dark Horse

By **Nate Melby**

Paul Hornschemeier's *Mother, Come Home* features a boy trying to cope with the loss of his mother, while his father struggles to maintain his own sanity. The complete tale will be released by Dark Horse in November.

Hornschemeier told *CBG* how he came up with the idea for the story, which was originally published in *Forlorn Funnies* #2-4 by Absence of Ink Press: "My stories are usually generated from images that pop into my mind, and there were two images that got *Mother, Come Home* started," he said. "The first image was one of a bearded father figure sitting by himself in an attic, on a bed. The second image was that of a little boy wearing a lion mask and a dark red cape walking through the snow."

But those were just images. To get the guts of the story, he had to look closer to home.

"I had those and started writing about the two images, but the major inspiration came when I was visiting my parents and I came to the realization that one of them was probably going to die first. In all likelihood, they are not going to die simultaneously."

"So it was my thinking about what it would be like to lose this person whom you have been with for so long, who has become your world. At the time, when I was just starting to write the story, the

person to whom I had been engaged had just left me, so I was in the getting-over-a-loss phase."

But something else also contributed to the creative process. "That influence combined with a moment during my philosophy studies in college: One of my professors was talking in class about various things and, all of a sudden, he sort of lost his mind — right in the middle of class. He had recently returned from a safari in Africa with his wife, and they were required to take anti-malaria drugs, and his wife had an extreme reaction to them and was basically on the verge of death."

"It was my thinking about what it would be like to lose this person whom you had been with for so long, who had been your world."

"He, as one of the most exceptionally intelligent people I have ever met, did all this research, and had actually contacted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and laid out to them why their research had been done incorrectly."

"It was really hard to watch him and it made a huge impression on me to see this man whose entire life is based on fact — to see him just lose it, when it came to this major, emotional event that he thought he could control like the normal things in his life, but when it came down to it, he couldn't."

The story of getting *Mother, Come Home* to Dark Horse is not quite as heartbreaking as the story itself.

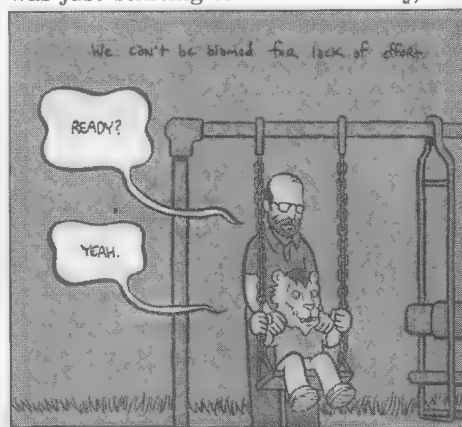
"I had been working on the story, and



the second part of it was almost finished when Dark Horse Senior Editor Diana Schutz called me to tell me that they were going to be giving another book of mine — *Stand on a Mountain, Look Back* — a plug in *Grendel*, which I thought was the most bizarre thing I had ever heard. I remember commenting to friends that it was akin to someone plugging *Forlorn Funnies* in a Spider-Man comic book.

"When she called, though, I sent her the first two issues of *Forlorn Funnies* (#2 was the first part of *Mother, Come Home*) as a thank-you. She wrote me saying that she didn't realize that I was being published by Absence of Ink (which was also publishing Farel Dalrymple's *Pop Gun War*). She then told me that Dark Horse was going to be publishing Farel's trade paperback and that she also wanted to also put out *Mother, Come Home* because she really liked it."

Although at that point, the final chapter of the story had yet to be published, Dark Horse and Hornschemeier quickly finalized arrangements. And now Hornschemeier is looking ahead — to a possible new format for *Forlorn Funnies* featuring even more tales. ♦



INSIDE THIS SECTION

- Ask Mr. Silver Age by Mr. Silver Age 28
- Red-Hot Thrill by Steven E. Mitchell 30

- Dear Captain by Andrew Smith 32

From science fiction to satire

Joe DeVito is painter, sculptor, and more

For more than 20 years, Joe DeVito's work has appeared in a wide variety of sites on the creative landscape. He has painted and sculpted everything from science fiction to satire as both illustrator and fine artist.

CBG recently had the opportunity to talk to DeVito about what has been, what is, and what will be.

"I hoped as a youngster," he told **CBG**, "that I could become an artist. I was exposed to drawing and painting and was taught about Leonardo and Michelangelo by my Uncle Joe, a priest, when he would come to visit. My older brother, Vito, was artistically inclined, and I learned *how* I could make a living as an artist, because no one in my family had."

"I went on to study art at Parsons School of Design and The Art Students League. I remember sitting in the Parsons auditorium as one of hundreds of incoming students, and the department head told us that only two of us would make it. I thought, 'How good are these people around me?' and wondered what it would take. It took a combination of *very* hard work, common sense in using my efforts effectively (better to do one great painting than several mediocre ones), and a well-placed prayer or two to do the trick. Eventually, it was a course in paperback covers that got me through the door. The instructor, a prominent New York art director, promised to give a job to one student at the end of the year. Luckily for me, I got it. I started working the day I graduated and have never stopped."

DeVito's first published work was a romance cover. He had never read a romance novel, but it was a good training ground, he said. "It gave me tremendous experience working with the human figure. I learned about different ways to

CATCHING UP WITH

Joe DeVito

By Tim Lasiuta

paint, color palettes, and that kind of thing. I later learned the Riley Method of painting from a fellow artist, Ralph Amatrudi, a personal variation of which I still use today." The Frank Riley Method was taught by Riley at The Art Students League of New York.

"James Bama played a big part in my art," DeVito said. "Other than being a Riley painter, as well, he, of course, painted more than 60 Doc Savage covers. I found out later that he also painted the Aurora Monster model box covers. As a boy, I was fascinated with monsters and dinosaurs and collected the models with a passion. His Aurora work is part of my early fascination with illustration. Around 10 years ago, after an interview in a Doc Savage fanzine in which I conveyed Jim Bama's great influence both on Doc and on my art for the new novels, Jim Bama sent me a letter thanking me for my kind remarks about his work, which I still treasure."

DeVito's work is diverse. Other than painting hundreds of paperback covers, he has been a sculptor and has produced posters, trading cards, specialty art for DC, and collectibles for Graphitti Designs and the Bradford Exchange. He has painted covers for *Mad*, worked for the toy and movie industries, and more. "The good thing about being an artist is that, at one time or another, you get to pursue *all* of your interests. That to me, is the beauty of being an illustrator. My need for change often compelled me to shift and move from one area to another, sometimes to my detriment. But over the

years I have built up a good slot everywhere.

"I have often been fortunate to be in the right place at the right time. That's how I got to do the Doc Savage covers. My DC work started with an off-the-wall comment to my art director such as, 'The only thing I miss about painting romance covers is painting beautiful women.'"

"He said, 'I didn't know that — how would you like *this* job?' and handed me a contract to paint *Further Adventures of Wonder Woman*. Years of fun painting and sculpting super-heroes followed — all because I happened to make a remark."

"Right now, I am working on a lavish 'visual novel' that expands on one of my first loves, King Kong. *King Kong* was the first monster movie I ever saw, and it blew me away. I have never gotten over that. The book will be published by Dark Horse, tentatively in the fall of 2004. My original story has the full approval of the Merian C. Cooper estate and is wholly based on the *King Kong* novel from 1932."

"It's written by Brad Strickland with John Michlig. I'm having a blast working with Brad on the writing, and the story will be wrapped around 30 to 40 original illustrations with many additional drawings."

"Since it's my first creator-owned project, I am looking forward to seeing it hit print and hope it receives an enthusiastic reception. I am also working on a commissioned statue almost twice life-size, which will be the centerpiece of an entire site I am also designing. It is my hope that both of these endeavors will be watershed projects for me. Time will tell."

In addition to his art, Joe DeVito can be found on the Internet at www.jdevito.com, currently under construction. ♦

IN BRIEF ...

SF Grand Master Clement dies at 81

Hal Clement, the author known for his science-fiction novels *Mission of Gravity*, *Iceworld*, and *Close to Critical*, died Oct. 29 in his sleep at his home in Milton, Mass., at the age of 81. Born Harry Clement Stubbs May 30, 1922, his interest in science and science fiction began in 1930 when he read a *Buck Rogers* comic strip featuring a spaceship on its way to Mars. His father took him to the library, where Clement picked up a book on astronomy as well as Jules Verne's *Trip to the Moon*.

His first published story, "Proof," appeared in the June 1942 issue of *Astounding Science Fiction*, and his first novel (one of the first SF mystery novels), *Needle*, was serialized in the same magazine in 1949.

Clement served in the Army Air Corps Reserve and flew 35 combat missions as a pilot or copilot. He retired as a full colonel in 1976. He also taught science, wrote science articles, and painted under the name George Richard. A popular guest at science-fiction conventions, he was accessible to his fans even as he continued to produce popular works combining hard science and extrapolation. He was noted for his ability to portray convincing aliens, from their biology to their civilizations.

Named a Grand Master by the Science Fiction Writers of America in 1999, he was given a Retro-Hugo Award in 1996 for his 1945 story "Uncommon Sense."

He is survived by his wife, Mary, three children, and one grandchild.

BIRTHDAYS and INDUSTRY EVENTS

Mon
10
NOV

CBG #1567 ships

Born on this date:
Bruce Chrislip (1954)
Neil Gaiman (1960)

Wed
12
NOV

Born on this date:

Carl Potts (1952)
Kelley Jarvis (1966)

Thu
13
NOV

Born on this date:

Doug Murray (1947)
Larry Doyle (1958) — 45 years ago
Randy Clark (1963) — 40 years ago

Sat
15
NOV

Born on this date:

Heidi D. MacDonald
Stu Schwartzberg
Martin Nodell (1915)
Michael Gallagher (1951)
Mike Gustovich (1953) — 50 years ago
George Broderick Jr. (1957)

Tue
11
NOV

Born on this date:

Roger Slifer
Dave Cockrum (1943) — 60 years ago
Jim Stenstrom (1950)
Susan F. Daigle-Leach (1960)
James A. Owen (1969)

New Comics Day! Scheduled to ship:

Dark Horse: *Blade of the Immortal* #84

DC: *Demon: Driven Out* #3, *Fables* #19, *Gotham Central* #13, *Nightwing* #87

Image: *Hellhounds* #4, *Witchblade* #71

Marvel: *Avengers* #73, *Kingpin* #6, *Nyx* #2, *Punisher* #35, *Spectacular Spider-Man* #6

Fri
14
NOV

Born on this date:

Alberto Giolitti (1923) — 80 years ago
Edd Vick (1958) — 45 years ago

Sun
16
NOV

Born on this date:

Richard Howell
Joe Judt

A Silver Age wish list

Gift ideas for the old-time comics fan who has (almost) everything

Dear Mr. Silver Age,
I want to buy a nifty Christmas present for my grandson, who's a fan of Golden Age and Silver Age comics. But he orders all the goldang new books, toys, gee-gaws, and gimcracks as soon as he sees them in the latest **Previews!** Can you suggest books that he might not already have?

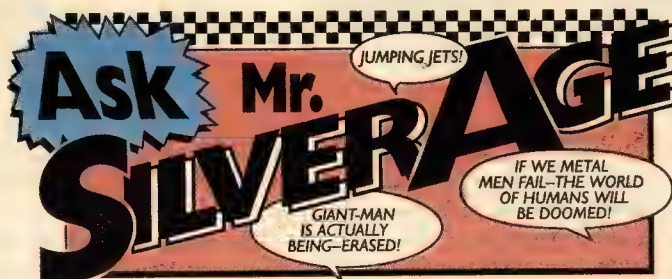
Gramps McF.
Yapburg

Mr. Silver Age says: I sure can, Gramps. Because, over the years, there have been a bunch of cool books released that have escaped even some of the hardest fans of old comic books. I imagine some collectors don't even realize that the books exist (and that they might be found in a used bookstore or on eBay). But, in other cases, they don't own them, because the books are so darn hard to find.

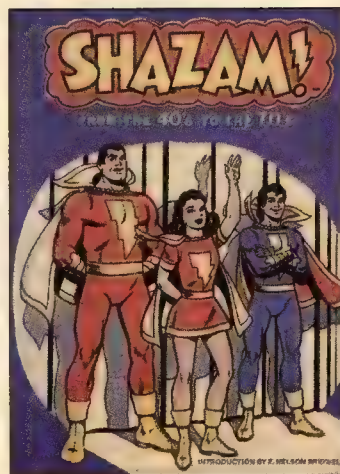
But **CBG** solicited wish lists, not shopping lists, and I've already previewed this fall's upcoming books (in **CBG** #1560). So here, in alphabetical order, are some volumes I think fans of old-time comics might like. All you have to do is *find* them:

The Adventures of Superman Collecting by Harry and Amanda Matetsky (1988, Russ Cochran, Publisher Ltd., ISBN: 0-930289-31-5). I like to think of this book as the companion to the more readily available 1996 volume *Batman Collected* by Chip Kidd. It's the same idea, albeit with not quite the same design flair that Kidd gave the Batman book.

Published to honor The Man of Steel's 50th anniversary, this coffee-table-sized tome was printed in a limited, slipcased edition of 2,500 copies. Its 215 pages featured four-color photos showcasing all kinds of cool Superman toys, games, action figures, and costumes from the first days into the 1980s. Many of the items were provided by Associate Editor Danny Fuchs, one of the more complete Superman collectors.



By **Craig Shutt**



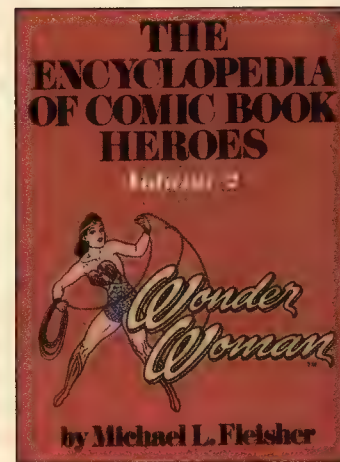
Shazam! from the Forties to the Seventies features 352 black-and-white and color pages of stories of the Big Red Cheese, many never reprinted elsewhere.

who also wrote the introductions.

Many of the Batman stories are key origins and introductions, so they've appeared other places, but a few

Batman from the Thirties to the Seventies (1971, Bonanza Books, Library of Congress Catalog Card #73-168329) and **Shazam! from the Forties to the Seventies** (1977, Harmony Books; ISBN: 0-517-531275). The Superman volumes in this series (*Superman from the Thirties to the Seventies* and ... *to the Eighties*) are fairly easy to find, but these two are less so. They're just as much fun, presenting black-and-white stories gathered by E. Nelson Bridwell,

haven't been reprinted anywhere else, according to Mark Waid's reprint database. Needless to say, most of the Captain Marvel stories haven't been reprinted, providing 350 pages of cheesy fun.



Yes, the hard-to-find Wonder Woman Encyclopedia is cool, but I'd love to have seen the rest of the volumes that were planned!

The Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes by Michael Fleischer: Volume 1 — Batman (1976, Collier Books, softcover, ISBN: 0-02-080090-8) and Volume 2 — Wonder Woman (1976, Collier Books, softcover, ISBN: 0-02-080080-00). These encyclopedia-style books are the aborted start to a massive referencing project to catalog the key comics super-heroes. Needless to say, Fleischer didn't pull it off — but we *did* get three volumes.

The Batman book details many (but not absolutely all) of the characters and places that appear in the Bat-books (*Batman* and *Detective Comics*) in his first 27 years. Plenty of illustrative panels and citations to specific stories, along with lengthy bits of dialogue, flesh out the items. The Wonder Woman volume also covers her first 27 years, but, at 253 pages, it's a substantially thinner volume than Batman's 387-page tome.

As an encyclopedia of true minutiae, both books can be tedious to read straight through. But browsing is tons of fun, especially the overwhelming "Batman" and "Wonder Woman" listings, which catalog virtually their entire histories (and would have been better broken into smaller listings under each topic). These books are key parts of the smoke and mirrors that make Mr. Silver Age appear to know something.

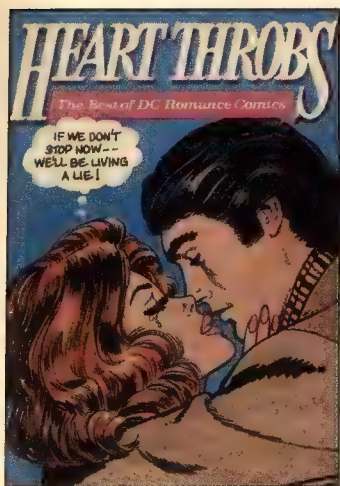
The amazing thing about these volumes is that, as noted, they were only the beginning of a planned series — and the work was pretty much finished. Fleischer and his assistant spent *seven years* pulling details from 10,000 comics for the entire series. A Superman book ultimately was published (1978, Warner Books, ISBN: 0-446-87494-9) as volume #3, although it was titled *The Great Superman Book*.

But the others never appeared. And the list printed in the first two volumes indicated that later editions would have featured Captain Marvel, Plastic Man, The Spirit, Green Lantern, The Flash, Captain America, Sub-Mariner, The Human Torch, Doctor Fate, Hawkman, Starman, and Spectre. If Mr. Silver Age ever finds himself in Lucien's library in *The Dreaming*, he's heading for those later volumes.



The Adventures of Superman Collecting contains a bunch of cool photos

Fireside's DC reprint books. In the late 1970s,



Heart Throbs doesn't provide the pulse-pounding citation info we comics geeks love, but it's a good collection of rarely seen material.

three reprint collections of key genres, all in four colors. *Heart Throbs: The Best of DC Romance Comics* by Naomi Scott [1979, Simon & Schuster, ISBN: 0-671-24773-5 (hardback) and 0-671-25236-4 (paperback)] seems to be the hardest to find, but it's probably the least in demand, too.

Sadly, the only citations comprise a listing of detailed copyrights. But there's no indication of which story goes with which issues — except in a few cases, in which they reprinted the issue's splash page,

indicia and all. D'oh! There, likewise, are no creator credits (unless, again, they were credited on the story's first page).

Even so, the book features top-notch Silver Age artists that even I can recognize on sight, and there are short introductions to explain the stories' groupings into categories, including Contemporary Romance, Serials, and The Man's Point of View. There's even a sampling of advice and letters columns. It's a nice package of material you won't find any other way.

Fans are better served by *America at War: The Best of DC War Comics* by Michael Uslan [1979, Simon & Schuster, ISBN: 0-671-24953-3 (hardback) and 0-671-24774-3 (paperback)]. This collection features a detailed table of contents that includes citations for issue numbers and publication dates. There's also a bibliography in the back, but, at 2fi pages, it's pretty perfunctory. Uslan provides an eight-page introduction before sampling war comics from each decade, showcasing key characters from Blackhawk to The Unknown Soldier.

The final book arrived the next year. *Mysteries in Space: The Best of DC Science Fiction Comics* by Michael Uslan (1980, Simon & Schuster, ISBN: 0-671-24775-1) followed the war book's format, with an overview of the genre and a bibliography, plus a checklist of key appearances of science-fiction characters. Chapters grouped the stories by topics, such as Aliens Visit Earth, Life in Space, Future Life on Earth, and Space Heroes.

Don't confuse this last collection with *Mystery in Space*, the 1999 "Pulp Fiction Library" volume from DC. A few of the stories are duplicated, but not many, so it makes a nice gift for a science-fiction fan — and it's probably the most readily available.

The Illustrated History of Superhero Comics of the Silver Age by Mike Benton (1991, Taylor Publishing Co., ISBN: 0-87833-746-6). This is one of a series of history books Benton wrote, beginning with a general overview of comics history plus additional volumes on Golden Age Heroes, Crime, Horror, and Science Fiction.

The Silver Age book covers the era from four perspectives: The History, which hits the high points and gives a feeling for how the comics developed; The Heroes, listing key, major, and other appearances as well as providing short overviews; The Artists, providing short bios of significant artists (but, sadly, no writers);

and The Comics, presenting key titles, their publication dates, major characters, significant issues, prominent artists, and brief overviews. It's fun to leaf through and it offers an effective way to look up information that other reference works don't provide.

The Monster Society of Evil Deluxe Limited Collector's Edition (1989, American Nostalgia Library, ISBN: 0-948248-07-6). This 3,000-copy, limited-edition coffee-table-sized book reprints the entire Monster Society serialized story that appeared in *Captain Marvel Adventures* #22-46 (1943-1945).



The Monster Society of Evil oversized color volume can make even grown-ups understand what it was like to read a Golden Age comic book.

Shot in color from the comics pages to preserve the old-time look and printed on shiny black pages in an oversized format, it helps replicate for more jaded fans of today what it must've felt like to open a Golden Age comic book as a kid and be enthralled. *The Comics Journal* offered a C.C. Beck-signed bookplate as a subscription incentive, but only 125 were completed before Beck died. So a few signed editions may be out there.

The Photo-Journal Guide to Comic Books by Ernst & Mary Gerber (1989, Gerber Publishing Co., ISBN: 0-9623328-0-I (Vol. 1) and 0-9623328-I-X (two-volume set)). The good news is that these books break from the tradition of the other volumes listed here, as they are readily available at online bookstores and they're getting cheaper all the time. I'd bemoan that trend, except I've been dazzled by these books since I first got them, making them well worth whatever price I paid.

These massive coffee-table books present thousands of covers of famous and seldom-seen comic books from the Golden Age up to the beginning of the Silver Age. For key titles, entire runs are presented; for the rest, only selected issues are shown. That's a bummer, but seeing the first 16 issues of *Action Comics* in glorious, shiny color on one huge page is enough to shut up even me.

The long runs have smaller images for later issues, which can be just as impressive in its own way. Seeing 25 and then 36 images on a page provides a feel for how the covers changed and reflected different themes. It's fun to pick out ones that have become well known

and even more fun to see so many that are little seen. The books includes publishers of all stripes, with comics listed in alphabetical order (at least by the comic book's name at the start of the run), creating juxtapositions that run the gamut.

The Photo-Journal Guide to Marvel Comics (1991, Gerber Publishing Co., ISBN: 0-9623328-4-4 (volume AJ), 0-9623328-5-2 (volume KZ), 0-9623328-7-9 (two-volume set), and 0-9623328-8-7 (deluxe edition) provides the same look at Marvel's output from *Fantastic Four* #1 through the mid-1970s (with a select few after that). These covers are much better known to us all, but seeing them so tightly packed together still is a rush.

A Smithsonian Book of Comic Book Comics by Michael Barrier and Martin Williams [1981, American Book-Stratford Press Inc., ISBN: 0-87474022805 (SIP) and 0-8-8109-0696-1 (HNA)]. This book presents a hefty sampling of key creators, reproducing the stories directly from the comics page to give it that yellowed look that I prefer to computerized coloring for these stories. Some of the creators are ones you don't see very often (but should), such as Sheldon Mayer (*Scribbly*), Basil Wolverton (*Powerhouse Pepper*), and George Carlson (*Jingle Jangle Tales*). Superman, Batman, Plastic Man, Captain Marvel, The Spirit, Little Lulu, Donald Duck, and Pogo also are presented, creating a brilliant collection of comics' best.



Superman at Fifty provides many interesting essays looking at *The Man of Steel* and his pals from many different viewpoints.

Superman at Fifty: The Persistence of a Legend edited by Dennis Dooley and Gary Engle (1987, Octavia Press, ISBN: 0-940601-00-1). This book also was produced for Superman's 50th anniversary (duh) and features essays on various aspects of The Man of Steel's life. The essayists include a few well-known to comics fans: Curt Swan, Dennis O'Neil, Harvey Pekar, and, briefly, Harlan Ellison. They join others less known to examine Superman's impact from many angles.

As to what's on my wish list, well, I'd love to see a copy of *Little Lulu Library Set I* sitting under the tree, but I'm not sure it was even published. And, I have to admit, were I in Lucien's library, I might first head to *The Photo-Journal Guide to DC Comics*. It's ready to be published, and I'd buy it in a heartbeat. Oh, if only a few thousand more people had Mr. Silver Age's impeccable taste! But that's a present not even Santa Claus can stuff down the chimney. ♦

Ask Mr. Silver Age is © 2003 by Craig Shutt. Send all comments to craigshutt@ameritech.net. With any luck, you can buy copies of *Baby Boomer Comics*, a collection of Mr. Silver Age's favorite columns from his early days, for everyone on your Christmas list and forget this entire column! It's available from Krause's festive operators at (800) 258-0929, offer CBHCS.

Comic-book controversy long before Wertham

The red-hot thrill: The comic-book crisis of 1948, Part Four

By Steven E. Mitchell

Last week: On May 2, 1948, Dr. Jesse L. Murrell, pastor of the First Methodist Church of Covington, Ky., delivered a sermon that resulted in the most widely publicized and longest lived anti-comic-book citizens' committee: the Greater Cincinnati Committee on Evaluation of Comic Books. Their intent, they insisted, was to educate the public, not to practice censorship.

By July, a three-part, 44-point rating system had been drafted by Dr. Herbert B. Weaver, associate professor of psychology at the University of Cincinnati. The system provided for the grading of comic books as not objectionable (A), some objection (B), objectionable (C), and very objectionable (D), based on their probable impact on children up to the age of 15. Cultural, moral, and emotional aspects of comics were considered, such as quality of art and printing, portrayal of criminals and the details of crimes, and the representation of death in the stories. Only comics rated A or B were considered suitable for children.

Fifty reviewers received instruction in application of the rating system from presentations of comic-book stories and individual story frames that illustrated each criterion. Each story in the comic book was evaluated independently by two reviewers and, with 87% of the stories, their ratings were the same. In the 13% of disagreements, a third reviewer provided a resolution. All three areas of content — cultural, moral, and emotional — were judged, and the story received an "Over-All" fourth rating that corresponded to its lowest rating in the first three areas.

According to Weaver, "it was assumed that a story which is very objectionable from the moral standpoint is very objectionable as a whole, no matter how com-

mendable from other standpoints."

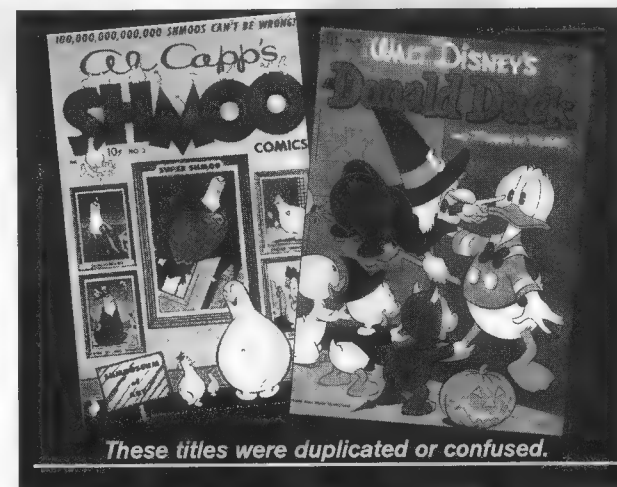
Finally, each comic book received the same rating as its lowest-rated story. Reviewers were cautioned to employ Weaver's criteria only as "guides and checkpoints." For their final evaluation, they were urged to use their own "best judgment regarding good taste, the intent and spirit of the story, and the context of the individual frames of the story."

Both the St. Paul and Cincinnati evaluations received wide distribution. Their lists of "best buys" or rated comics were available by mail from each group, for use by other groups or individual parents. In addition, *Christian Century* reported on both groups (Oct. 12 and Dec. 28, 1949) and, from 1950 to 1956, *Parents' Magazine* published the Cincinnati evaluations.

A comparison of lists of 1949 comics reviewed by both groups revealed the dangers of drafting and applying codes of standards. For example, 22 comics rated "best buys" by St. Paul were classified "objectionable" by Cincinnati.

"An additional difficulty was encountered in simply identifying comic-book titles."

An additional difficulty was encountered in simply identifying comic-book titles. The first *Parents' Magazine* Cincinnati list reviewed comic books published in the spring and summer of 1949. Of 555 titles reviewed, no objection was offered to 165, while 154 were rated "some objection," 167 were rated "objectionable," and 69 were very objectionable." Over 57%,



therefore, were found to be suitable for young children.

However, there was some duplication and confusion of titles. For example, *Al Capp's Shmoo* is also listed as *Shmoo*, and *Walt Disney's Donald Duck* is also listed as *Donald Duck*.

While their totals might not have been accurate, the industry must have been heartened by the committee's conclusion that, because only 12.45% of all comic books received the "very objectionable" classification, a wholesale condemnation of comics was not warranted.

While the activities of citizens' groups publicized the defects of comic books, some voluntary cooperation between city officials and retailers, distributors, and publishers continued. "Objectionable" comics were removed from display and sale in Hammond, Ind.; Columbus and Racine, Wis.; Washington, D.C.; Peoria, Ill.; Oneida and Monroe Counties, N.Y.; and East Hartford, Conn. Special committees were established in Oneida and East Hartford to censor publications, as well as in Hartford and New Britain, Conn., and Chicago, Ill.

The Hartford resolution that established a committee in that New England city was part of a "Cleanup the News-Stand Week" proclaimed from June 20 to June 27, 1948. The seven-member committee assisted and advised distributors "as to which might constitute unfavorable literature, from the standpoint of criminal and sex glorification, especially the types of publications that command the undivided attention of many pre-teen-age and teen youth."

Bellingham (Wash.) Mayor Don E. Satterlee appointed a special committee in that city's Censor Board to investigate the problem of comic books. With the cooperation of local distributors, this group employed a positive-negative grading system to ban 67 comics.

The mayor of Sacramento appointed a nine-woman committee to study means to eliminate undesirable comics, but, surprisingly, it announced there would be no attempt to impose censorship.

Many officials shunned direct or precipitate action and expressed the belief that the industry should devise and impose its own standards. This view was shared by St. Louis Mayor Aloys S. Kaufman and Mayor Hubert Humphrey of Minneapolis. In Provi-

Code of the Association of Comics Magazine Publishers

Adopted July 1, 1948

The Association of Comics Magazine Publishers, realizing its responsibility to the millions of readers of comic magazines and to the public generally, urges its members and others to publish comics magazines containing only good, wholesome entertainment or education, and in no event include in any magazine comics that may in any way lower the moral standards of those who read them. *In Particular:*

1. Sexy, wanton comics should not be published. No drawing should show a female indecently or unduly exposed, and in no event more nude than in a bathing suit commonly worn in the U.S.A.
2. Crime should not be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy against law and justice or to inspire others with the desire for imitation. No comics shall show the details and methods of a crime committed by a youth. Policemen, judges, government officials, and respected institutions should not be portrayed as stupid or ineffective, or represented in such a way as to weaken respect for established authority.
3. No scenes of sadistic torture should be shown.
4. Vulgar and obscene language should never be used. Slang should be kept to a minimum and used only when essential to the story.
5. Divorce should not be treated humorously nor represented as glamorous or alluring.
6. Ridicule of or attack on any religious or racial group is never permissible.

The Association anticipates the support of all publishers in its effort to enforce the minimum editorial standards of the Comics Code. It is pointed out, however, that comics magazines are usually prepared at least three months before issues go on sale, so that practical application of the code may not be evident for a number of months.

dence, R.I., a special Mayor's Committee appealed to publishers and distributors to raise their standards, because comics then available presented "a great danger to the moral and educational development of the boys and girls and teenagers."

On July 1, 1948, the moribund Association of Comics Magazine Publishers (ACMP) announced a code of editorial standards in response to the flood of public outcry and indignation, diminishing sales on both new and established titles, and official action by some cities. Phil Keenan, general manager of Hillman Periodicals and successor to George Delacorte as association president, described the six-point code of minimum standards as "only the first step in a plan for raising the moral tone of comic magazines."

Under this code, crime could not be glorified, respect should be maintained for government and law officials, and details of crimes could not be depicted. No scenes of "sadistic torture" were to be shown. "Sexy, wanton comics" were not allowed, and no female could be shown in dress more revealing than the common bathing suit. Slang was to be minimized and obscenities were not permitted. Divorce could not be treated as desirable or humorous. And, finally, no ridicule of or attack on any racial or religious group was allowed.

In addition, it was announced that the association was considering the appointment of a commissioner to assure the adherence to the code by subscribing publications and to impose penalties for non-adherence. A seal that would identify member publications was also promised. Keenan asked that the public not expect immediate results and stated that the effects of the

code would be apparent in three months.

Unfortunately, the members of the industry were no longer united in this effort to police their publications. A mass of defections had occurred since the association had been announced in May 1947. Only 12 publishers, which accounted for less than one-third of the total comic-book output, now belonged to the ACMP or agreed to adhere to the code while abstaining from membership.

"Members of the industry were no longer united in their effort to police their publications."

These 12 were: Ace Magazines, Avon Periodicals, Consolidated Magazines, Famous Funnies, The Golden Willow Press, Hillman Periodicals, Lev Gleason Publications, McCombs Publications, Orbit Publications, Parents' Institute, Premium Service Co., and Superior Comics. Dell, Fawcett, Timely-Marvel, Harvey, and 19 others had dropped out.

National, Dell, and others contended that their products were not of the type against which criticism was directed. Dell Vice President Helen Meyer further elaborated that it was the position of her company that the books produced by Dell and marked with the association seal would only have served as an "umbrella," beneath which the more questionable type of material could have hidden.

On Sept. 9, Keenan announced that the association

members and those who subscribed to the code had been advised to submit copies of their comics immediately for review so that, because of advance publishing schedules, changes would be apparent as soon as possible. The self-imposed three-month deadline set by Keenan in July was apparently indefinitely postponed.

Henry E. Schultz, a lawyer and member of the Board of Higher Education of New York, was named executive director and general counsel of the ACMP and supervisor of the screening process. Publishers were assessed a fee for each title reviewed, based upon the number of copies of the title to be circulated. Titles with a circulation of more than 500,000 were reviewed for \$100, those with a circulation of 250,000 to 500,000 were charged \$50, and titles with a circulation of less than 250,000 were screened free.

The announcement of a screening process was described as only the first step in the association's campaign to improve its publications. After a survey and appraisal by Schultz of all member comics, consultations with the publishers were to be held to discuss compliance with still incomplete standards. The roster of the ACMP remained unstable during this crucial period. Between July and October 1948, Educational Comics, Crestwood Publishing, and an unidentified publisher joined the association. Consolidated withdrew in the same period. The total number of members had reached 14. ♦

Next week: The ACMP creates an advisory committee to offer recommendations to improve comic books.

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Comics Convention Listing Form

Comics Buyer's Guide Convention Calendar, 700 East State Street, Iola, WI 54990-0001

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Name Of Show _____	Contact Address _____
Location (Building) _____	City _____
Location (Street Address, Brief Directions) _____	State, Zip _____
Show Hours To Public _____	Contact Phone _____
Number Of Tables _____	Second Contact Phone _____
Size And Cost Of Tables _____	

cbg@krause.com

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Art: Don Heck
Weird Terror #9
© Comic Media

Favorite revamps

Readers praise certain EYKIWs

Jason Allen of DuBois, Penn., chimes in on our discussion of EYKIW (Everything You Know Is Wrong) stories:

I read your column in *CBG* #1563 about Everything You Know Is Wrong and immediately thought of two examples that I've been impressed with in the years I've been reading comics.

The first example is actually a two-parter, the first being "Monster!" from *Incredible Hulk* #312 (Oct 85). Writer Bill Mantlo was slowly returning The Hulk from mindless savage to a more familiar scenario of Banner-Hulk transformations. In this issue, he retold the origin of The Hulk, not starting at the Gamma Bomb detonation, as most origin stories would, but, rather, starting with Bruce Banner's birth. This gave a new insight into The Hulk's origins, including glimpses into his torturous childhood. The most important aspect of the story is how Bruce had learned to internalize his fears and anger. Nothing was done with this remarkable insight until Peter David took over the title. Leading to ...

"Mending Fences!" from *Incredible Hulk* #373 (Sep 90) through "Honey, I Shrunk The Hulk!" from *Incredible Hulk* #377 (Jan 91). "Mending Fences!" was notable for two things. First, it is the only instance I have found in which Lou Ferrigno was mentioned by name in the



Dear Captain ...



By Andrew Smith

series. Second, it established that Bruce Banner was, in fact, a multiple personality. Over the next four issues, Bruce's MPD (Multiple Personality Disorder) was explored, until, in "Honey, I Shrunk The Hulk!" it was learned that Banner had had the disorder years before becoming The Hulk and further explained why various cures had not worked.

Then, in that milestone issue, the various personalities were merged into a new, very large, and very green Bruce Banner.

The Hulk EYKIW is impressive to me, because it has taken a character that had decades of continuity and given the readers a new view of that character *without* disrupting the history of the character. While similar EYKIWs were done with Swamp Thing and The Vision, it took more work to apply the new take on the character to what had come before than The Hulk's did. It's the best EYKIW I can think of.

The second example is recent by comparison and unfortunately doesn't pack as much of a punch but still changes a perception of a character. The two issues in this EYKIW are "Transformations, Literal and Otherwise!" from *Amazing Spider-Man* #30 (Vol. 2, or #471, Jun 01) and "The Long, Dark Pizza of The Soul" from *Amazing Spider-Man* #32 (#473, Aug 01). The first issue of J. Michael Straczynski's (and I can't tell you how proud I am that I got that spelling of his name right without looking it up first) run on the title, #30, brought into question the way in which Peter got his powers. Not that just that Peter was bitten by a radioactive spider, but possibly that the spider was trying to give him his powers before it was exposed to the radiation. This explanation was backed up by Ezekiel, an older man who had powers nearly identical to Peter's. Then, in #32, he made an observation that many of Spidey's ma-



jor villains were like him in using animals for the basis of their strength — that there are links between them that *they* aren't even aware of.

While not as strong as the Hulk's EYKIW, I remember having a Keanu Reeves "Whoa!" moment and looking at Spidey's foes in a different light after reading these issues. While I still don't buy into Straczynski's altered take on Spidey's origins, I love the way he managed to tie the webhead's Rogues Gallery together.

I hope you found this interesting. I look forward to seeing what your other readers come up with for this topic.

Thank you very much for your time.

The Captain replies:

And thank you for your letter, Jason. (Who says good manners are dead?)

And you've hit on two EYKIWs that I really appreciated. The revelation of Bruce Banner's MPD was a real head-slapper of a moment: stone obvious in retrospect, so why didn't we twig to it earlier? Because it took a good writer (or several of them) to see it. "Honey, I Shrunk The Hulk!" was a golden EYKIW moment that made sense of every Hulk story since 1962 without changing a word of the original stories or bleeding them of any of their meaning. It gets a thumbs up from this quarter.

The Straczynski Spider-Totem story hasn't rubbed everybody the right way. Some feel it EYKIWs the character too far from his roots and robs the character of some of his originality (since he'd be just one Spider-

avatar among many).

But I'm of the opinion that Straczynski artfully dodged all those bullets. He never established that Parker was a Spider-avatar — we just have Ezekiel's word for that, and Parker himself doesn't appear to believe it.

In other words, we can decide for ourselves. For my part, I choose *not* to believe it — I don't want Spider-Man to be anything but unique. But, since Straczynski left me an escape clause, I'm even more appreciative of his run on *Amazing Spider-Man*, which has been uniformly excellent. Besides, it was a darn good story.

I file this one under "optional EYKIW."

Speaking of options, Herb Jacobi offers one:

Maybe it should be EYKIW but only ITPU — In This Particular Universe.

Back in the day when there were multiple universes or timelines, you could do that. An interesting idea would have been for the original-concept Swamp Thing from one universe meeting the Moore-revised Swamp Thing, just as the two Flashes or GLs or other characters did. But since DC, in its infinite wisdom, deleted all of those via *Crisis*, you can't do that. Elseworlds stories, like the old "Imaginary" stories, don't count.

The Marvel universe did things differently by incorporating old idea and stories such as the original Human Torch and adding them to the ongoing timeline. It works when it works, as you mentioned with The Vision. But when it doesn't and becomes a Mopee, such as the parentage of Quicksilver and The Scarlet Witch, it creates a muddle.

By the way, the last time I wrote you said that I was **The Man Known as Herb**. The full name is in the e-mail. Yes, I use my real name.

The Captain replies:

But are you the pre-*Crisis* Herb or the post-*Crisis* Herb? And have the two of you ever met?

As to ITPU, I'm on record as lamenting the loss of DC's multiverse. I know, I know, it's been 17 years — I should stop whining about it, shouldn't I? But *Crisis* committed what I consider the cardinal sin of a revamp: It reduced sensawunda and story possibilities, instead of expanding them.

Maybe, as DC's company line has it, the multiple Earths scenario had become unwieldy. Maybe a housecleaning was in order. But surely another solution could have been found — why restrict your characters' potentials?

Ah, well, that's all the whining I can gin up at the moment. Besides, I'm having too much fun saying ITPU. It-poo! It-poo! Try it; it makes my dog look at me funny.

Fellow CBG scribe Jack Abramowitz took time away from crafting his own articles to write:

I really liked the Miracleman EYKIW — that all the hokey old Marvelman stories were intentionally outrageous scenarios being fed to the sleeping Marvelman family. Of course, just as Jay Garrick turned out to be real on Earth-2, I choose to believe that those stories "really" happened in some other continuum.

There's EYKIW on TV, too, you know! Good EYKIW:

Newhart, St. Elsewhere. Bad EYKIW: Dallas, Roseanne.

The Captain replies:

It's interesting how many conventions we think of as restricted to comic books that show up in other entertainment venues, Jack. For example, I realized the last time I was reading *The Adventure of the Empty House* — in which Arthur Conan Doyle revealed that Sherlock Holmes had survived his "death" at Reichenbach Falls in *The Final Problem* — that what I was reading was a retcon! As all good Holmesians know, Doyle had killed Holmes most sincerely dead — but had to resurrect the character due to public outcry. There may be earlier examples of retcons in literature — *Empty House* was published in 1903 — but I'm not aware of them.

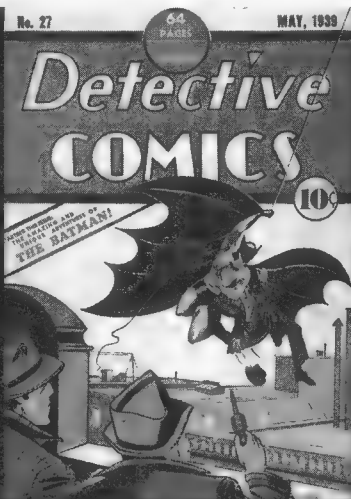
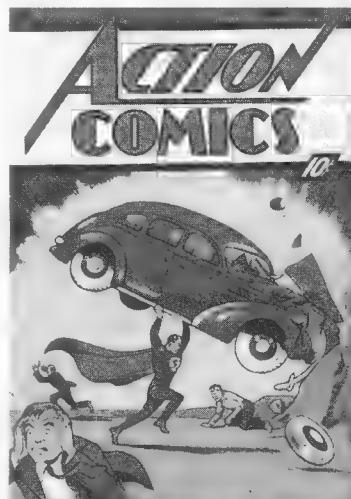
And, yes, the Miracleman EYKIW was just brilliant — and led to rousing new stories without necessarily ruining the old ones. That's what a good EYKIW does, and that's one of the best.

Next up is Dennis McCarthy, who writes:

As usual, another excellent column. There was only one thing missing: a suggestion for the proper pronunciation of EYKIW.

I vote for "IQ." Besides the fact that it's dripping with irony ("Everything You Know Is Wrong?"), a recent study by a team of experts has proven that all comics fans are smarter than, well, everybody else. But we all already knew that, because, as this totally scientific study has proven, we're smarter than everybody else.

The EYKIW column also raised a question. (Your columns always make me think — you better cut that



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out!): Has any writer working in the *Daredevil* mythos ever identified the blind man whom young Matt Murdock rescued at the expense of his own eyesight?

I like to think that, after all these years and all these heroes and all these adventures, there was this guy — just a regular guy, no super-powers, no metagenes — who took it upon himself to manipulate the creation of (and, subsequently, the occasional protection of) all super-heroes.

He was the guy who had the Murdocks under surveillance for years and knew that young Matt had the heart of a hero and engineered a horrific accident, knowing full well that Matt had what it took, not just to survive it, but to become a better man thereby.

He was the guy who jammed the government's radar so that Reed Richards and company could launch their rocket without getting detected and shot down.

He was the guy who goaded Rick Jones into driving out to a Gamma Bomb test site.

And he was the guy, hiding in the rafters, who dropped that spider at the crucial moment.

And, afterward, he was on the scene now and then (or working behind the scenes) to give the hero a little extra help or to give the villain a little extra shove.

Has anyone ever done a story like this, or close to it?

The Captain replies:

I thought it had been established that the blind man young Matt Murdock saved was his mentor-to-be Stick. I can't find a shred of evidence to back me up on this, so I may be thinking of a "What If?" or have fallen victim to wishful thinking or maybe I'm remembering some fever dream or fanfic. If any DD fans can help out the clueless Captain, I'd appreciate it.

Oh, and Jim Kreuger's *Earth X/Paradise X/Universe X* series of maxi-series suggested that all of Marvel's heroes were the products of genetic manipulation by The Celestials. I don't recall the details — the "X" series makes my head hurt sometimes — but it's possible that some of the heroes were created in specific.

As to the pronunciation of EYKIW, you must have missed where I made my suggestions. I pronounce a good EYKIW an "IQ," and I call a bad one an "Ick-you." That may be too complicated (or fanboyish) for general use, so pronounce it how you please. ♦

Andrew Smith, who writes the *Captain Comics* syndicated newspaper column, can be reached at capn-comics@aol.com or on his message board, www.captaincomics.us.

A Captain Comics Bonus!

Uber-Editor Brent Frankenhoff asked if The Captain wanted to contribute to this week's theme, the Holiday Wish List. You can bet your Wonder Woman mini-bust I do! (And, by the way, am I the only one who finds "Wonder Woman mini-bust" an oxymoron?)

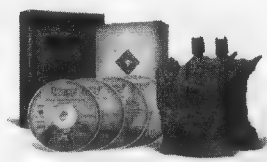
Five things I'd recommend giving:



1) **Peter Bickford's ComicBase 8.0:** OK, at \$299, it's a bit pricey — but not if you consider what you get! Seven gigabytes of comic-book data, covers, and movies, and an unparalleled cataloging system make this the perfect gift for a comics collector. And, if you're upgrading from a previous version (you can order online at www.comicbase.com), it's cheaper. If you're still balking at the price (cheapskate!), get:

2) **The 2003 Standard Catalog of Comic Books:** OK, this may look as if I'm buttering up the bosses — it's published by Krause, and *CBG's* Maggie Thompson, Brent Frankenhoff, and John Jackson Miller are among the authors — but, if you don't like this book, I'll buy it from you. Collated in conjunction with *ComicBase*, it's the biggest collection of comic-book data on Earth, more than any three issues of *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* put together. It's indispensable for the serious collector (or columnist). The 2002 book is out of print, but the 2003 update is available at most bookstores, and the price is usually in the \$34.95 range.

3) **Lord of the Rings deluxe DVDs:** Most DVD "extras" are more annoying than interesting; usually, it's endless interviews with directors and actors talking about themselves in the third person and patting themselves on the back. But the "making of" segments in the *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* DVD were

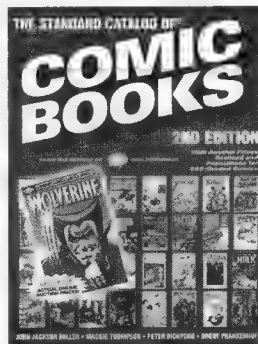
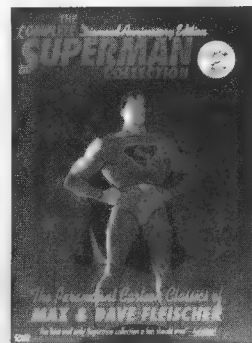


fascinating — Peter Jackson didn't make a movie trilogy so much as plan a full-scale medieval war. And the Collector's Boxed Set has two polystone Argonath bookends that not only hold all my *LotR* material, but also look so sharp my wife allows me to display 'em in the "public" parts of the house. Prices are variable (often on sale), and they're available all over the place.

4) **Max Fleischer's Superman/Superman: The Lost Episodes:** These DVDs contain the legendary 1930s Superman cartoons by the Max Fleischer studios. All I have to say about 'em is that their legendary status is well-deserved and they can be enjoyed by kids of all ages (whether they collect comics or not). Prices range from \$4.45 (used) to \$19.99, and they're available online and at brick-and-mortar chain stores.

5) **Trade paperbacks, Archives, Masterworks, Essentials, and other collections:** There are so many wonderful collections out there now for the hard-core fan, I'm going to have to buy more bookshelves. Yes, I have most of the original comics and I wouldn't give them up. But easily accessible collections of '60s JLA-JSA crossovers or Uncle Scrooge adventures or seminal comic strips (*Li'l Abner*, *Popeye*, *Flash Gordon*) or early issues of Silver Age characters are far preferable for research than pulling out fragile, crumbling 40-year-old comics from plastic bags. And even if you *don't* write a column for *CBG*, you just can't beat curling up on the couch with old favorites in a durable format. Last year, I got my nephew *The Essential Wolverine* Vol. 1, and it was his favorite Christmas present. Well, that and the \$200 I gave him to fix his car ...

I'm supposed to list the one gift I'd like, as well. It may seem cheesy, but I suppose it's the *2003 Standard Catalog of Comic Books*. As I said, I find it simply indispensable. Aside from that, I already have the best gift of all: e-mail from The Legion of Superfluous Heroes. You folks make every day seem like Christmas when I boot up the computer.



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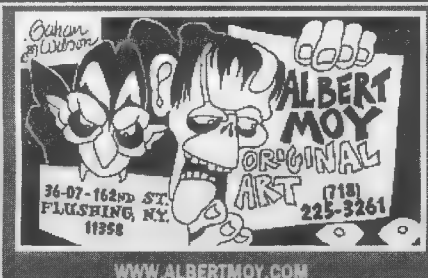
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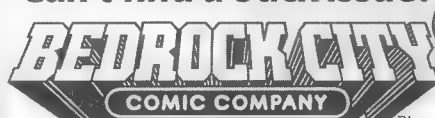
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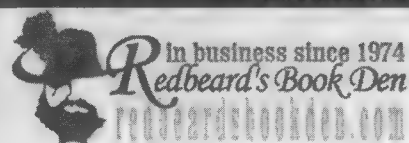
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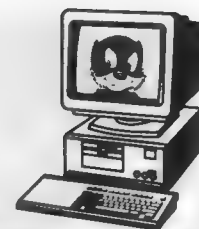
THE GUIDE

"At CBG, we believe that every reader of comics is also a collector of comics. We don't throw them away when we're done. While comics are an entertainment medium, certain comic books do accrue value — almost always, older comics in short supply in good condition. It's our mission to watch the secondary market to help you protect the value of your comics and save on the classic comics you want."

Make mine Miller, er, Marvel!

Chuck Rozanski tells Marvel about Miller's Lite marketing scheme.

Tales from the Database, Page 44



The ways people are buying, selling, and trading classic comic books today!

CGC on eBay

Auctions closed between
Oct. 19-25, 2003
All met their reserve price.
Populations reported
are as of Aug. 13

Amazing Spider-Man Vol. 1 #14 in CGC 9.4 (NM)

One of 10 copies in grade; there are
7 better in 9.6.

\$8,400

Incredible Hulk #181 in CGC 9.6 (NM+)

One of 61 copies in grade; there are
6 better including 1 in 9.9.

\$4,210

Amazing Spider-Man Vol. 1 #1 in CGC 6.5 (F+)

1 of 27 copies in grade; there are 86
better including 1 in 9.8.

\$4,028

All-Star Comics #32 in CGC 9.4 (NM)

q of 2 copies in grade;
there are none better.

\$3,849

X-Men #5 in CGC 9.4 (NM)

1 of 7 copies in grade;
there are 4 better in 9.6

\$3,151

Batman #20 in CGC 9.0 (VF/NM)

1 of 5 copies in grade;
there is 1 better at 9.2.

\$3,000

Incredible Hulk #1 in CGC 6.0 (F)

1 of 3 copies in grade; there are 51
better, including 1 in 9.4

\$2,850

Geppi aims to involve all collectors in quest

\$1 million for *Action* #1 is designed to upgrade best condition of key issue

By Nate Melby

Diamond Comic Distributors CEO and President Steve Geppi's offer of a reward of \$1 million for a Near Mint copy of *Action Comics* #1 is designed to involve not only comics collectors but also all other memorabilia collectors in the quest.

The show announcement. The announcement was made Oct. 31, as Geppi displayed a copy of *Action* #1 at the first Las Vegas Comic-Con. Convention Event Director Robert Brueggeman said of the issue, "The Golden Age of Comics

really started with the introduction of Superman. *Action Comics* #1 has been called the queen mother of comic books, giving birth to both a popular superhero and an entire genre of Americana."

Geppi said, "I hope this reward prompts people to check their basements, attics, garages, and elsewhere for vintage comic books and memorabilia they want to sell. You never know what Grandpa might have stashed away."

The convention, too, targeted the gen-

eral public as well as comics buffs. Brueggeman said before the show, "We'll have experts available to give free appraisals to everyone who brings in their old comic books for evaluation."

Graders from Comics Guaranty LLC (CGC) were also scheduled to have live third-party grading on-site during the show.

Action #1. As fans know, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster created Superman, whose adventures and origin were first published in *Action* #1 (Jun 38), priced at 10¢. The anthology title also introduced the magician Zatara and The Man of Steel's eventual wife Lois Lane.

As the general public knows, Superman is one of the best-known comic-book icons in the world. The issue Geppi seeks is one of the most sought-after comic books in the world.

Thousands were printed initially; the exact number of copies that survived paper drives, parental destruction, and childhood handling is unknown, but there are believed to be fewer than 100 in existence.

Geppi's \$1 million reward is for a copy of *Action Comics* #1 that grades at least 9.4 (Near Mint condition) on the grading scale of Comics Guaranty LLC. So far, the best grade that CGC has given to an unrestored issue of the issue is 8.5 (VF+). The company has graded 27 issues altogether.

Although the announced Geppi reward is for a copy in condition better than any identified so far, the collector has added that he is willing to pay \$25,000 for a copy in unrestored Good condition.

In addition to his comics interests, which includes many key issues and a large quantity of original art, Geppi is also the owner and publisher of *Baltimore Magazine* and a part owner of the Baltimore Orioles.

More information about his reward offer is available at (410) 560-7100 XT 169.♦



Geppi recently showed off his love of Superman and comics at Diamond International Galleries.

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● Tales from the Database by Chuck Rozanski 44

The man who loved art

Make a collecting plan (or not): It's your choice

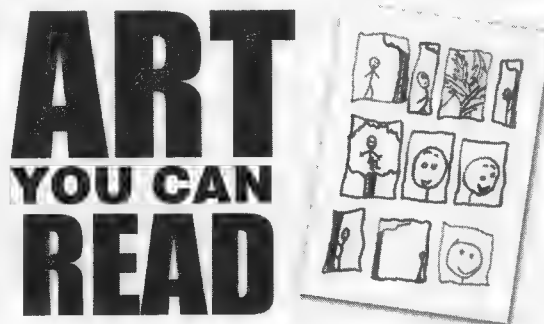
How do you begin a series of columns on as broad and exciting a field as collecting original art?

After much thought, I decided it might be good to begin with an ending — sadly, the death of an old friend who had collected art for over 20 years. About three years ago, his widow contacted me about helping her sell his collection of almost 1,000 originals. I had been out of touch with him for almost a decade. My last contact had been a sad phone call asking me to take him off my mailing list because he was going blind, a horrible fate for someone who had spent his life collecting the visual arts — both originals and comic books.

Helping people sell original art. While I don't sell art as a business, I do often help people sell originals, mainly as a means to obtain pieces for my own collection. Over the years, in times of economic distress or to raise money to buy other art, I had sold my friend several pieces that I had regretted selling. There were also several occasions over the years when I had arrived to a dealer's or artist's table, only to meet him walking off with pieces I had wanted. I was hoping that those pieces would be in his estate.

My hopes were not high. He had been blind for years before his death and would have had little reason to save the more valuable pieces that could be easily sold. Also, I had seen several of his originals reproduced in Jerry Weist's *Original Art Price Guide* — suggesting that they had passed on long before he had.

Days later, I was pleasantly surprised to find all of them still there. A bigger surprise was what *else* was there. For more than 20 years, I had run the Chicago Comicon Benefit Art Auction, which my friend religiously attended. The auction received a wide range of art each from the outstanding to the commonplace. While my friend had gone after many of the better pieces, he also regularly bought many of the lowest of the low: very minor pieces priced at around \$10. Oddly all of that art, pieces most collectors would have bought and traded or sold, was also still in the collection. In fact, every piece I had ever seen him buy was there. Unlike his 200 boxes of comic books, which were sorted between dealer stock for shows and his permanent collection; there was no dealer



By George Hagenauer

stock for art. He seemed to have kept everything.

This was odd, because most collectors' tastes change over more than 20 years of collecting. (When I started collecting, I bought a lot of 1970s Marvel and DC art. As I lost interest in those comics, much of that art was traded for other pieces I liked more.) The mystery deepened, as I began helping sell his comic-book collection this year. It was obvious that he had a very strong focus to collecting comic books. While the overall collection ranged from the late 1930s to the early 1990s, his passion was E.C., and — to create a complete set of E.C.s (including the early 1940s material) — he had sacrificed much of his early Marvels as well as many Golden Age comics.

Given his interest in E.C., I would have expected the same thing to have happened with his art. While some E.C. art was in the collection, almost all had been purchased from the original Cochran auctions. There was no evidence that he had thinned other art to increase the number of E.C. pieces.

As far as I could tell, he just plain loved art: the great, the average, and the downright awful. Back when we both had started collecting in the 1970s, art was scarce, especially in the Midwest. As such, there was a magic to it, a sense of awe at owning a one-of-a-kind drawing that linked you to an artist or story you enjoyed.

Since art was scarce, you often bought what was available. As the '70s progressed, decisions by DC and Marvel to return art to the artists dumped tens of thousands of pieces onto the market. A sense of wonder no longer car-

ried the collector. There were a lot more decisions to be made as to what to buy, and most serious art collectors developed internal road maps to guide them through the market.

Road maps. All collectors develop these road maps. Comic-book collecting can make for very simple road maps. You decide on particular titles, companies, artists, writers, or characters; create a checklist and you are in business to go hunting.

Art is a lot harder — which is why many comic-book collectors find it difficult to make the transition to collecting original art. The neat and tidy checklist doesn't exist; you have to create it. For every new comic book that exists, there are 20 or more one-of-a-kind distinct originals. If you collect comics, the decisions are limited:

- How scarce is it?
- What condition do I want?
- How much am I willing to pay?

With art, it's all one-of-a-kind; it tends to be expensive and it's often difficult to compare prices, since pages from the same issue can range in price as much as 1,000% from a minor interior page to the cover.

So you have to create a road map and develop a critical sense of what you want to effectively collect. This is also why art collections can be so interesting to view, as they reflect more than anything else the personality of the collector.

My friend did develop something of a road map as time went on. His later correspondence reflects more of a focus on E.C. art and E.C. artists. But, even in his last days, he was buying more out of a love of art than from a tightly focused strategy and buying an odd span of art.

Back then, that was possible. Access to art was limited in the Midwest to one big con a year along with a smattering of pieces at a bowling-alley or other small monthly shows. Otherwise, there were occasional lists (usually with few pieces pictured), the occasional Cochran Auction, and periodic *CBG* ads.

Today. Now, it's different. As I write this, more than 2,800 pieces of original art are for sale on eBay — more than at a major convention in the early '90s — and eBay is just one venue. Counting other auction sites, dozens of websites, *CBG* ads, etc., it's a collector's paradise. Or a collector's hell, if you don't have a road map. I've seen people discover art on eBay, buy everything they like, and find themselves with their credit card-tapped out and the collection becoming a source of untold stress, as opposed to pleasure.

My friend, sadly, never had the chance to experience those choices. I hope this column can create a dialogue that helps all of us to successfully follow our own paths in collecting original art in the months to come. ♦

George Hagenauer is a graying 53 and has been collecting art since 1967. While he has collected art, written a few comics, and run the longest continual comic-art charity auction, he has never written a column before. Feedback about what you want in this column can be e-mailed to yellowkd@terra.com.net (no attached files, please — the anti-virus eats them, anyway) or sent to Box 930093, Verona, WI 53593.



Both these pieces, a rather crude Western panel by an unknown artist (left) and a beautiful example of Ralph Reese's Solomon Kane art (right), were in my friend's collection. Can you tell what plan he followed for his collection? I can't.

EYE ON eBay

Oct. 19-25, 2003 CGC auctions

by Darryl Buchanan

An auction for *Superman* #1 dominated this week's action. The copy was in 9.0 (VF/NM) condition with extensive professional restoration. The book received a high bid of \$50,000 but did not meet the seller's reserve. A little research shows that this *appears* to be the same copy that Heritage Comics Auctions sold this summer for \$15,000. If so, it's one of the most astonishing run-ups in price to date!

GOLDEN AGE: An extraordinarily high-grade copy of *All-Star Comics* #32 came in a distant second in Golden Age auctions. The copy, in 9.4 (NM) condition, brought \$3,849.

Next up was a *Detective Comics* #33 in restored 8.0 (VF) condition that went for \$3,000. This is the seventh appearance of Batman. The cover of this book has a dramatic picture of Batman wearing what looks to be a holstered gun!

A rare copy of *Superman* #2 in restored 8.5 (VF+) condition was next on the list at \$2,550. The copy had moderate professional restoration. This week was an extraordinary opportunity to obtain high-grade copies of both *Superman* #1 and *Superman* #2!

SILVER AGE AND NEWER: An *Amazing Spider-Man* #14 in 9.4 (NM) condition topped our Silver Age list this week at \$8,400. This sought-after issue features the first appearance of The Green Goblin. The \$8,400 realized in this auction is off a little bit from the \$9,000 to \$10,000 range these copies were bringing last year.

Another high-grade *Amazing Spider-Man* copy was in second place this week. A copy of *Amazing Spider-Man* #2 in 9.2 (NM-) condition brought \$8,100. The \$8,100 bid on this issue exactly matches the \$8,100 bid on the last 9.2-graded copy of this issue in May 2002.

A copy of *Batman* #608 (the Retailer Incentive Edition) in 9.8 (NM/MT) condition brought an incredible \$2,425! This is the highest price seen for a comic book that is less than a year old.

IN DEPTH: This week, there were 1,420 auctions retored receiving bids, versus 1,397 last week and 1,465 two weeks ago. Total dollar bidding was \$298,578, versus \$221,311 last week and \$225,504 two weeks ago. There were 28 auctions receiving bids of \$1,000 or more, compared with 39 last week and 28 two weeks ago.

Darryl Buchanan can be reached at dbuchanan@the-comicsheet.com.

ComicLink Comments



SUB-MARINER COMICS #1

Timely • Spr 1941 • Cover 10¢

This copy was a beauty and one of the top three CGC-graded copies. It would make any high-grade Timely collector proud. The cover shows Sub-Mariner rising from the seas and capsizing a Nazi U-boat. In addition to Subby, the issue also contains an Angel adventure. The sold copy had cream to off-white pages.

SOLD IN VF- (CGC 8.5) FOR: \$25,000



AVENGERS #4

Marvel • Mar 1964 • Cover 12¢

With Captain America's Silver Age return, this is one of the most significant issues of the early Marvel run. This high-grade copy sold on ComicLinkExpress.com in the new Auction section of the site. The copy had off-white pages and an uncommonly white cover.

SOLD IN NM- (CGC 9.2) FOR: \$3,400



STRANGE TALES #114

Marvel • Nov 1963 • Cover 12¢

This issue foreshadowed the return of Captain America to the Marvel universe with an acrobat disguising himself as The Star-Spangled Avenger and battling The Human Torch. Eleven copies have been graded 9.2, six 9.4, and two 9.6 to date by CGC. The sold copy was from the Northland pedigree and had off-white pages.

SOLD IN NM (CGC 9.2) FOR: \$750



AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #12

Marvel • May 1964 • Cover 12¢

Doctor Octopus makes his third appearance, and the third time seems to be the charm, as he finally defeats his arch-enemy. The sold copy was glossy with off-white to white pages. With the second Spider-Man movie featuring both Spidey and Doc Ock approaching, these issues are heating up.

SOLD IN VF+ (CGC 8.5) FOR: \$600



EERIE #8

Avon • Aug 1952 • Cover 10¢

One of the more popular pre-Code horror titles, this Avon series ran from 1947 to 1954. This issue, from the middle of the run, was from the Northford pedigree collection and had off-white pages. It is currently the highest CGC-graded copy.

SOLD IN VF/NM (CGC 9.0) FOR: \$1,025



TOMB OF DRACULA #10

Marvel • Jul 1973 • Cover 20¢

Blade the Vampire Hunter made his first appearance in this issue. It would take more than a quarter-century for the character to leap to the silver screen, but he's done it twice to date. This issue is scarce in Near Mint/Mint. This was the highest-graded copy and one of only three copies graded 9.8. It had off-white to white pages.

SOLD IN NM/MT (CGC 9.8) FOR: \$1,500

Noteworthy CGC Closing Prices on eBay (All copies are unrestored)

ISSUE	GRADE	PRICE	ISSUE	GRADE	PRICE	ISSUE	GRADE	PRICE	ISSUE	GRADE	PRICE
Action Comics #23	4.5	\$1,525	Amazing Spider-Man #14	7.5	\$808	Aquaman #30	9.4	\$178	Fantastic Four #1	4.5	\$2,600
Action Comics #32	7.5	\$1,125	Amazing Spider-Man #14	6.5	\$475	Atom #18	9.4	\$150	Fantastic Four #2	4.5	\$700
Action Comics #87	8.5	\$575	Amazing Spider-Man #14	4.5	\$340	Avengers #1	6.5	\$500	Fantastic Four #3	2.5	\$233
Action Comics #100	6.5	\$305	Amazing Spider-Man #19	6.0	\$166	Avengers #2	5.0	\$460	Fantastic Four #5	5.0	\$686
Adventure Comics #37	5.0	\$499	Amazing Spider-Man #25	8.0	\$170	Avengers #2	9.0	\$1,240	Fantastic Four #5	5.0	\$650
Adventure Comics #52	5.0	\$468	Amazing Spider-Man #30	9.2	\$405	Avengers #2	8.0	\$500	Fantastic Four #5	3.0	\$312
Adventure Comics #104	4.0	\$150	Amazing Spider-Man #41	9.2	\$643	Avengers #2	7.5	\$380	Fantastic Four #6	5.0	\$300
Adventure Comics #105	8.5	\$900	Amazing Spider-Man #44	9.2	\$370	Avengers #4	2.5	\$151	Fantastic Four #6	5.0	\$259
Adventure Comics #210	2.5	\$250	Amazing Spider-Man #45	9.2	\$225	Avengers #8	9.0	\$375	Fantastic Four #10	7.0	\$179
Adventure Comics #247	3.5	\$500	Amazing Spider-Man #53	9.4	\$381	Avengers #12	9.2	\$614	Fantastic Four #50	9.2	\$670
Adventure Comics #359	9.6	\$373	Amazing Spider-Man #54	9.2	\$205	Avengers #24	9.6	\$230	Fantastic Four #58	9.6	\$511
Air Fighters Comics #2	6.0	\$440	Amazing Spider-Man #57	9.2	\$180	Avengers #24	9.4	\$190	Fantastic Four #61	9.4	\$225
All Top Comics #12	7.0	\$303	Amazing Spider-Man #58	9.2	\$168	Avengers #51	9.4	\$158	Fantastic Four #91	9.6	\$260
All-Star Comics #3	7.0	\$3,002	Amazing Spider-Man #59	9.4	\$300	Avengers #68	9.6	\$225	Fantastic Four #94	9.6	\$312
All-Star Comics #32	9.4	\$3,849	Amazing Spider-Man #69	9.2	\$160	Avengers #104	9.6	\$171	Fantastic Four #112	9.4	\$566
All-Star Comics #35	8.5	\$1,411	Amazing Spider-Man #101	9.6	\$1,077	Batman #20	9.0	\$3,000	Fantastic Four Annual #1	8.0	\$405
Amazing Fantasy #15	4.0	\$2,622	Amazing Spider-Man #109	9.6	\$255	Batman #22	7.5	\$565	Feature Book #26	8.5	\$765
Amazing Spider-Man #1	6.5	\$4,028	Amazing Spider-Man #121	9.0	\$206	Batman #106	8.0	\$250	Fighting Yank #18	9.4	\$598
Amazing Spider-Man #1	2.5	\$1,110	Amazing Spider-Man #122	9.0	\$153	Batman #143	9.4	\$595	Flash #105	8.0	\$2,649
Amazing Spider-Man #2	9.2	\$8,100	Amazing Spider-Man #129	9.2	\$725	Batman #179	9.2	\$275	Flash #123	6.0	\$265
Amazing Spider-Man #2	6.5	\$449	Amazing Spider-Man #129	9.2	\$560	Batman #232	9.4	\$375	Flash Comics #8	6.0	\$750
Amazing Spider-Man #4	6.0	\$445	Amazing Spider-Man #134	9.6	\$225	Batman #232	9.0	\$199	Forever People #1	9.4	\$155
Amazing Spider-Man #5	8.0	\$1,651	Amazing Spider-Man #135	9.4	\$168	Batman #237	9.2	\$150	Giant-Size X-Men #1	9.4	\$1,575
Amazing Spider-Man #5	5.0	\$323	Amazing Spider-Man #153	9.8	\$230	Batman (RRP) #608	9.8	\$2,425	Giant-Size X-Men #1	9.4	\$1,320
Amazing Spider-Man #5	3.0	\$170	Amazing Spider-Man #168	9.8	\$230	Batman (Sketch)(DF) #612	9.8	\$150	Giant-Size X-Men #1	9.4	\$1,305
Amazing Spider-Man #6	5.5	\$315	Amazing Spider-Man #169	9.8	\$230	Captain Action #1	9.4	\$158	Giant-Size X-Men #1	8.5	\$466
Amazing Spider-Man #7	8.0	\$725	Amazing Spider-Man #252	9.8	\$249	Captain America Comics #48	7.5	\$799	Giant-Size X-Men #1	8.0	\$405
Amazing Spider-Man #7	7.0	\$395	Amazing Spider-Man #300	9.6	\$208	Cerebus The Aardvark #3	9.4	\$455	Giant-Size X-Men #1	7.0	\$275
Amazing Spider-Man #8	8.0	\$455	Amazing Spider-Man #300	9.6	\$200	Cerebus The Aardvark #4	9.6	\$325	Giant-Size X-Men #1	7.0	\$250
Amazing Spider-Man #8	7.5	\$455	Amazing Spider-Man #316	9.8	\$178	Cerebus The Aardvark #5	9.6	\$255	Green Lantern Vol. 2 #1	4.5	\$355
Amazing Spider-Man #8	5.5	\$188	America's Best Comics #5	7.0	\$331	Cerebus The Aardvark #6	9.8	\$228	Green Lantern Vol. 2 #34	9.4	\$317
Amazing Spider-Man #9	5.5	\$220	Animal Fables #1	8.5	\$250	Cerebus The Aardvark #7	9.8	\$306	Green Lantern Vol. 2 #85	9.4	\$238
Amazing Spider-Man #10	7.5	\$430	Aquaman #1	7.5	\$455	Cerebus The Aardvark #21	9.8	\$158	Harvey Comic Hits #57	9.0	\$160
Amazing Spider-Man #14	9.4	\$8,400							Haunt Of Fear #11	9.2	\$481

Amazing Spider-Man #14 sells for \$8,400



A copy of *Amazing Spider-Man* #14 (Jul 64) graded 9.4 (NM) sold for \$8,400 on Oct. 19 on eBay. There are seven issues graded better, all of them graded 9.6 (NM+).

The issue, written by Stan Lee with art by Steve Ditko, features the first appearance of The Green Goblin in "The Grotesque Adventure of The Green Goblin."

— Nate Melby

EXCLUSIVE CGC PRICE INDEX

For CGC-graded comics auctioned, *Comics Buyer's Guide* compared the differences between the median closing price offered at each grade and *The 2003 CBG Checklist & Price Guide* price for an ungraded NM copy.

COMICS PUBLISHED BEFORE 1990

CGC comics graded ...sold for a median price of
9.9 NM+2442%
(or 25.4 times the NM guide price)
in the quarter beginning July 1
"Mint" Sample: 34 (97% of all) 9.9 copies sold on eBay

CGC comics graded ...sold for a median price of
9.8 NM+900%
(or 10.0 times the NM guide price)
in the quarter beginning July 1
"Near Mint/Mint" Sample: 1,145 (76% of all) 9.8 copies sold on eBay

CGC comics graded ...sold for a median price of
9.6 NM+470%
(or 5.7 times the NM guide price)
in the quarter beginning July 1
"Near Mint+" Sample: 2,228 (76% of all) 9.6 copies sold on eBay

CGC comics graded ...sold for a median price of
9.4 NM+295%
(or 3.95 times the NM guide price)
in the quarter beginning July 1
"Near Mint" Sample: 2,326 (75% of all) 9.4 copies sold on eBay

CBG's definition: Barely perceptible wear; tight spine. Some discoloration acceptable in older comics.

CGC comics graded ...sold for a median price of
9.2 NM+130%
(or 2.3 times the NM guide price)
in the quarter beginning July 1
"Near Mint-" Sample: 1,391 (77% of all) 9.2 copies sold on eBay

CGC comics graded ...sold for a median price of
9.0 NM+60%
(or 1.6 times the NM guide price)
in the quarter beginning July 1
"Very Fine/Near Mint" Sample: 1,103 (75% of all) 9.0 copies sold on eBay

CGC comics graded ...sold for a median price of
8.5 NM+10%
(or 1.1 times the NM guide price)
in the quarter beginning July 1
"Very Fine+" Sample: 878 (76% of all) 8.5 copies sold on eBay

CGC comics graded ...sold for a median price of
8.0 NM-13%
(or 0.87 times the NM guide price)
in the quarter beginning July 1
"Very Fine" Sample: 721 (77% of all) 8.0 copies sold on eBay

CBG's definition: Slight creases, wrinkles at staples, some loss of gloss. Otherwise a flat, clean issue.

CGC comics graded ...sold for a median price of
7.5 NM-37%
(or 0.63 times the NM guide price)
in the quarter beginning July 1
"Very Fine-" Sample: 477 (75% of all) 7.5 copies sold on eBay

CGC comics graded ...sold for a median price of
7.0 NM-49%
(or 0.51 times the NM guide price)
in the quarter beginning July 1
"Fine/Very Fine" Sample: 402 (70% of all) 7.0 copies sold on eBay

CGC comics graded ...sold for a median price of
6.0 NM-67%
(or 0.33 times the NM guide price)
in the quarter beginning July 1
"Fine" Sample: 258 (73% of all) 6.0 copies sold on eBay

CBG's definition: Cover worn but clean; no tape or writing. Stress lines, more rounded corners.

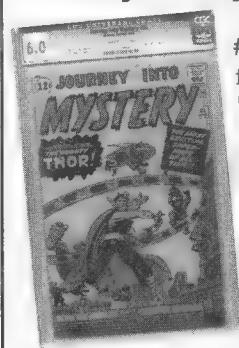
ISSUE	GRADE	PRICE	ISSUE	GRADE	PRICE
Incredible Hulk #181	9.4	\$2,250	Marvel Mystery Comics #215.0	..	\$417
Incredible Hulk #181	9.2	\$1,214	Marvel Mystery Comics #738.0	..	\$512
Incredible Hulk #181	8.5	\$670	Marvel Mystery Comics #838.5	..	\$1,326
Incredible Hulk #181	7.5	\$405	Marvel Spotlight #5	9.4	\$911
Incredible Hulk #181	7.0	\$400	Marvel Team-Up #1	9.2	\$170
Incredible Hulk #181	6.0	\$305	Marvel Team-Up #4	9.4	\$224
Incredible Hulk #181	4.5	\$238	Miss Fury #1	5.5	\$788
International Comics #1	8.0	\$427	Miss Fury #6	5.5	\$224
International Comics #4	7.5	\$360	Mysterious Adventures #1	8.0	\$350
Iron Fist (35 Cent) #14	6.0	\$366	Mystic Comics #8	8.5	\$1,532
Iron Fist #15	9.6	\$273	New Adventure Comics #197.0	..	\$1,063
Iron Man #1	9.4	\$710	New Gods #1	9.4	\$164
Iron Man #2	9.4	\$182			
Journey Into Mystery #83	6.0	\$1,502			

Journey Into Mystery #83 closes at \$1,502

A copy of *Journey into Mystery* #83 (Aug 62) graded 6.0 (F) sold for \$1,502 on Oct. 19 on eBay. There are 45 graded better, with the highest graded 9.6 (NM+).

The issue, written by Stan Lee with art by Steve Ditko and Jack Kirby, features the first appearance and origin of Thor as well as his alter-ego, Dr. Don Blake.

— Nate Melby



Journey Into Mystery #106	8.5	\$199	New York		
Journey Into Mystery #109	9.0	\$425	World's Fair 1940	5.0	\$1,439
Justice League			Nick Fury #1	9.4	\$228
Of America #54	9.4	\$196	Nick Fury #2	9.6	\$220
Kamandi #1	9.6	\$152	Our Army At War #81	4.0	\$321
Marvel Authentix:			Ozzie And Harriet #1	5.5	\$219
Amazing Spider-Man #1	9.6	\$400	Phantom Lady #15	6.5	\$900
Marvel Feature #1	9.6	\$1,025	Planet Comics #37	8.5	\$430
Marvel Feature #2	9.4	\$200	Rangers Comics #39	9.0	\$164

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- Our insurance carrier is AM Best's rated A+ (Superior).
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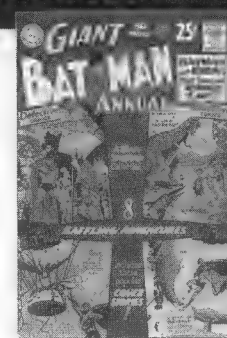
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ISSUE	GRADE	PRICE	ISSUE	GRADE	PRICE	ISSUE	GRADE	PRICE	ISSUE	GRADE	PRICE
Tales Of Suspense #16 . . . 8.0 . . .	8.0	\$409	Ultimate Spider-Man (DF) #19.8 . . .	9.4	\$450	Uncanny X-Men #30 9.2 . . .	9.2	\$200	Weird Science #13 7.5 . . .	7.5	\$405
Tales Of Suspense #40 . . . 5.0 . . .	5.0	\$305	Ultimate Spider-Man			Uncanny X-Men #35 9.2 . . .	9.2	\$262	Werewolf By Night #1 . . . 9.4 . . .	9.4	\$282
Tales Of Suspense #45 . . . 9.2 . . .	9.2	\$710	(White Variant) #1 9.4 . . .	9.4	\$325	Uncanny X-Men #39 9.4 . . .	9.4	\$380	Werewolf By Night #32 . . . 9.4 . . .	9.4	\$298
Tales Of Suspense #47 . . . 9.0 . . .	9.0	\$315	Ultimate Spider-Man			Uncanny X-Men #54 9.2 . . .	9.2	\$160	Wings Comics #70 8.5 . . .	8.5	\$160
Tales Of Suspense #49 . . . 7.0 . . .	7.0	\$178	(White Variant) #1 9.4 . . .	9.4	\$310	Uncanny X-Men #60 9.6 . . .	9.6	\$610	Wings Comics #85 9.4 . . .	9.4	\$450
Tales Of Suspense #68 . . . 9.4 . . .	9.4	\$312	Ultimate Spider-Man			Uncanny X-Men #64 9.4 . . .	9.4	\$300	Wings Comics #86 9.4 . . .	9.4	\$450
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X-Men #5 sells for \$3,151

A copy of *X-Men* #5 (May 64) graded 9.4 (NM) sold for \$3,151 on Oct. 21 on eBay. There are four copies graded better, all of them graded 9.6 (NM+).

The issue, written by Stan Lee with art by Jack Kirby and Paul Reinman, features an appearance by The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants (The Toad, Quicksilver, The Scarlet Witch, and Mastermind).

— Nate Melby

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I originally started this as a story proposal with **Batman** chasing the **Joker** into **Andy Griffith's** Mayberry and sent it to **DC**. Perhaps if **Denny O'Neill** had been at all nice to me I mighta just given up on it. However, (and perhaps he was just having a bad day) he was so crabby and condescending (he told me that I had a better chance of winning the lottery than in having a Batman story published) that I decided then and there I was gonna write the thing anyway. I made the protagonist a French Black man and the Joker a pale Nazi. You can read the first two chapters on-line free at **RALPHAGESSNER.com**. Check it out and see if Denny was actually being kind.

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Selling by the case

Chuck Rozanski helps Marvel brew a new strategy



By **Chuck Rozanski**

In last week's column, I related that I was very provocative in my very first meeting with Marvel's President, Jim Galton, going so far as to ask him bluntly whether dedicating my life to the world of comics made any sense in light of Marvel's seemingly precarious financial situation. To my surprise, Galton didn't immediately throw me out of his office for my confrontational attitude. He was, in fact, quite gracious in the level of candor of his answers. He didn't try to sugarcoat Marvel's deteriorating sales situation, nor did he avoid the issue of his being pressured by Cadence Industries (Marvel's parent company) management to quickly reverse the financial situation at the company. In essence, he told me he had been sent to Marvel to either clean it up or shut it down.

The good news about a company that is in serious trouble is that it helps break down otherwise rigid internal barriers to change. In this instance, while I'm certain that Galton viewed me as a presumptuous little twerp in our first meeting, he was also wise enough to understand that he needed to make serious changes in the marketing of the company products. Given that newsstand sales were rapidly melting away, my rants about the potential viability of a nationwide network of comics specialty shops were alluring. Galton was not one to jump into anything, however, without first seriously considering the possible negative ramifications, so, at the end of our discussion, he sent me back to discuss my ideas further with Marketing VP Ed Shukin.

It was during this long dialog with Shukin that all my years of study finally paid off. Ed was a career

newsstand guy and was fantastic at working the good ol' boy network that existed among the more than 500 small and large distributors who controlled the regional newsstand distribution system for comics, magazines, and paperback books.

"My basic argument was that Marvel should entirely focus its sales efforts on actively building up its base of dedicated fans."

Thanks to my being mentored by Emil Clausen (Boulder's newsstand distributor), I was well versed in the pluses and minuses of the ID wholesaler system and could cover this topic with Shukin well. I made it very clear from the beginning that I knew that his situation was both difficult and precarious because of the inexorable decline in mass-market retail sites willing

to even carry comics. Unless a new method was conceived that would cut Marvel's distribution costs (most specifically, the cost of refunding the 60%-80% of the newsstand-distributed comics that were being returned unsold each month), the future of the company was bleak.

It was at this point that I first made my "Lite Beer" analogy to Shukin. For those of you who don't remember the dark days of the 1970s, there was no such thing as "Lite Beer" until the owners of Miller Brewing decided to change the marketing of their product from the stodgy "The Champagne of Bottled Beers" to the more catchy concept of (I'm seriously paraphrasing here) "You can drink a keg and not get fat!" I had just happened to do a case study on Miller's marketing a couple of years prior to my meeting with Marvel, while I was a business school major at the University of Colorado. The idea that Miller chose to abandon the mass of its customers, in favor of focusing on just that segment of its market that drank the most, seemed brilliant. I believe that it was in an article in *Business Week* that I read that, in creating "Lite," Miller's target audience was the guy who drank *at least* a six-pack a day.

My basic argument to Shukin was that Marvel should entirely focus its sales efforts on actively building up its base of dedicated fans (or, as they were called in the day, Marvel Zombies), by abandoning the sinking ship of newsstand sales and, instead, working to strengthen the struggling network of direct-market comics specialty shops. By providing Shukin with an alternative system that might enhance high-profit sales to buyers who purchased multiple issues each month, I was presenting Marvel with a methodology for potentially replicating the fantastic marketing coup pulled off by the geniuses at Miller. Why take on the huge distribution costs of selling into the mass market, when you could sell many thousands of issues through one or two stores per region? The economics of my proposal were compelling.

In retrospect, I firmly believe that I swayed Ed Shukin with my beer analogy. He already knew that the Irjax lawsuit challenging Seagate's sweetheart deal for direct-market distribution was going to force the company to radically change its distribution policies. The only question at that time was exactly *which* changes to implement. Given that he had a blank slate to work with, the suggestions that I had presented in my earlier letter to his assistant, Bob Maillo, seemed like an excellent place in which to start.

Before we got down to discussing possible alternatives to its existing marketing systems, however, Shukin asked me if I would first like to meet Marvel's current Editor in Chief, Jim Shooter. Having never met Shooter before, I was thrilled at the opportunity to meet the man who in 1979 was already reviving Marvel's editorial output.

To be continued ...

Chuck Rozanski, owner of Mile High Comics, the world's largest online comics retailer, can be reached directly at chuck@milehighcomics.com. To receive his weekly e-mail newsletter, visit milehighcomics.com and sign the guest book.

What customers are buying ...

Top Golden and Silver Age sold

by Mile High, from Oct 17-23, 2003:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. <i>Amazing Spider-Man</i> Vol. 1 #28 in VG | \$98.16 |
| 2. <i>Amazing Spider-Man</i> Vol. 1 #17 in FR | \$74.55 |
| 3. <i>Iron Man</i> Vol. 1 #20 in VF | \$55.00 |
| 4. <i>X-Men</i> Vol. 1 #35 in VG | \$51.15 |
| 5. <i>Superman</i> #141 in VG | \$49.20 |
| 6. <i>Uncle Scrooge</i> #45 in FN | \$45.45 |
| 7. <i>House of Mystery</i> #106 in FN | \$42.40 |
| 8. <i>House of Mystery</i> #108 in FN | \$42.40 |
| 9. <i>Uncle Scrooge</i> #63 in FN | \$38.85 |
| 10. <i>Star Spangled War Stories</i> #18 in GD | \$37.50 |

Top CGC-graded comics sold

by Mile High, from Oct. 17-23, 2003:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. <i>Metal Men</i> #1 in 8.5 | \$1,150.00 |
| 2. <i>Amazing Spider-Man</i> #300 in 9.6 | \$400.00 |
| 3. <i>Star Wars</i> #24 (Mile High 2) in 9.8 | \$349.95 |
| 4. <i>Ultimate Spider-Man</i> #1 (DF variant) in 9.4 | \$233.40 |
| 5. <i>X-Men</i> Vol. 1 #131 (Mile High 2) in 9.6 | \$216.00 |
| 6. <i>All-American Men of War</i> #127 in 4.5 | \$208.00 |
| 7. <i>Star Wars</i> #38 (Mile High 2) in 9.8 | \$150.00 |
| 8. <i>Thor</i> #195 (Mile High 2) in 9.4 | \$113.40 |
| 9. <i>Sandman</i> #8 in 9.0 | \$47.55 |
| 10. <i>Wolverine</i> #2 in 8.5 | \$35.70 |

Top Modern comics sold

by Mile High, from Oct 17-23, 2003:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. <i>Spider-Man</i> #1 (platinum) in NM | \$291.60 |
| 2. <i>Amazing Spider-Man</i> #298 in NM | \$120.00 |
| 3. <i>Ultimate Spider-Man</i> #5 in NM | \$75.00 |
| 4. <i>Ultimate Spider-Man</i> #1 in FN | \$72.00 |
| 5. <i>Amazing Spider-Man</i> #136 in VF | \$64.80 |
| 6. <i>Ultimate Spider-Man</i> #2 in NM | \$60.00 |
| 7. <i>Ultimate Spider-Man</i> #4 in NM | \$60.00 |
| 8. <i>Planet of the Apes</i> #1 in NM | \$58.35 |
| 9. <i>30 Days of Night</i> #2 in NM | \$52.50 |
| 10. <i>Daredevil</i> #1 in NM | \$48.75 |

Top-selling comics

by Mile High, from Oct 17-23, 2003:

- | |
|---|
| 1. <i>Batman</i> #619 (Heroes cover) |
| 2. <i>Batman</i> #619 (newsstand edition) |
| 3. <i>Batman</i> #619 (Villains cover) |
| 4. <i>X-treme X-Men</i> #1 |
| 5. <i>Superman/Batman</i> #2 |
| 6. <i>X-Men</i> #2 |
| 7. <i>New Teen Titans</i> #21 |
| 8. <i>Avengers</i> Vol. 3 #63 |
| 9. <i>Spider-Man/Black Cat: Evil That Men Do</i> #3 |
| 10. <i>X-Men</i> Vol. 2 #117 |

The above results come from Mile High's website and often are caused by a sale.



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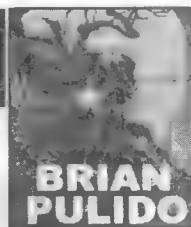
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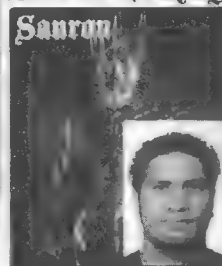
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CONVENTION PREVIEW

Nov. 21-23
Arlington, Texas



WHAT, WHERE, AND WHEN

Where:

Arlington Convention Center
1200 Ball Park Way (off I-35)
Arlington, Texas

Hours:

Friday: Noon to 7 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Admission:

Tickets are \$20 for a one-day pass and \$40 for a three-day pass. Tickets can be ordered online at www.wizarduniverse.com or by calling (800) 690-1669. Children 10 and under get in free with the purchase of an adult ticket.

Wizard World Texas advance ticket purchasers will receive an exclusive variant edition of *Wolverine: The End* #1 written by Paul Jenkins with a new cover by David Finch. The comic book may be picked up at the show.

For more information:

More details are available at www.wizarduniverse.com.

Super-heroes head to Texas

Wizard World launches southern convention in Dallas

Starting Nov. 21, the Dallas-Fort Worth area will be invaded by the likes of Wolverine, Chewbacca, and Superman and pop-culture aficionados from around the world, as Wizard World hosts Wizard World Texas, its first convention at the Arlington Convention Center.

Organizers billed the three-day convention as the largest multimedia event in the Southwest and said they expect to draw a crowd of more than 7,500. The Guest of Honor is artist George Pérez, one of the driving forces on *JLA*/*Avengers*, the 20-years-in-the-making mini-series.

Pérez will be joined by other celebrities including: indie film producer Kevin Smith and actor Jason Mewes, better known as Jay and Silent Bob from the films *Clerks*, *Dogma*, *Chasing Amy*, and *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*; Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca from the *Star Wars* saga); Allison Mack of the WB's *Smallville*; and Noah Hathaway of *Battlestar Galactica* and *The Neverending Story*. In addition, Guillermo del Toro, director of the upcoming *Hellboy* film as well as *Blade II*, will make a special presenta-

tion Saturday afternoon, along with *Hellboy* creator Mike Mignola.

Exhibitors. Dozens of publishers and creators are scheduled to attend. They include Sony PlayStation, DC Comics, Palisades Toys, Wiz Kids, and Arlington, Texas-based Score Entertainment.

Also scheduled are such creators as Jim Lee, Joe Quesada, Josh Blaylock, David Mack, and Darick Robertson.

In addition, organizers said one of the largest groupings of pop-culture retailers ever at a show in Texas will set up, selling new and vintage action figures, movie posters, original art, and comics.

Panels. While panel schedules were still being determined by presstime, some highlights include:

- *JLA*/*Avengers* panel with George Pérez and Kurt Busiek
- WizKids IndyClix National Championships
- Score's national Dragon Ball Z Grand Kai Invitational Tournament
- Wizard School in which aspiring artists and seasoned professionals alike can go back to school, as industry experts teach them the tricks of the trade. This school offers pop-culture fans the opportunity to fine-tune their skills with free classes like *Writing the Killer Scene*, *Building Character*, *Coloring Digitally*, and *How to Plot*.



Jason Mewes (left) and Kevin Smith (right), aka Bluntman and Chronic, are just two of Wizard World Texas' media guests.

Wizard School will be held for one-hour periods throughout the weekend. ♦



Smallville's Allison Mack was a recent addition to Wizard World Texas' guest list.



Media panels will discuss various upcoming films.

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4111 Black & White, Wanted
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4125 Comics Shows/Events

4126 Comic Supplies
4128 Dark Horse, For Sale / Wanted
4130 DC, For Sale
4131 DC, Wanted
4140 Dell / Gold Key / Whitman, For Sale
4141 Dell / Gold Key / Whitman, Wanted
4150 Disney, For Sale
4151 Disney, Wanted
4156 Distributors
4160 EC, For Sale
4161 EC, Wanted
4170 Fawcett, For Sale
4171 Fawcett, Wanted
4180 Foreign, For Sale
4181 Foreign, Wanted
4185 Graded Comics, For Sale
4186 Graded Comics, Wanted
4190 Harvey, For Sale
4191 Harvey, Wanted
4200 Humor / Funny Animals, For Sale
4201 Humor / Funny Animals, Wanted
4204 Image, For Sale / Wanted
4207 Malibu, For Sale / Wanted
4210 Marvel / Timely, For Sale
4211 Marvel / Timely, Wanted
4215 Platinum Age, For Sale
4216 Platinum Age, Wanted
4220 Science Fiction / Horror, For Sale
4221 Science Fiction / Horror, Wanted

4240 Underground, For Sale
4241 Underground, Wanted
4250 Independents, For Sale
4251 Independents, Wanted
4255 Valiant / Voyager, For Sale / Wanted
4260 Westerns, For Sale
4261 Westerns, Wanted
4300 Golden Age, For Sale
4301 Golden Age, Wanted
4310 Silver Age, For Sale
4311 Silver Age, Wanted
4320 General Comics, For Sale
4321 General Comics, Wanted

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4400 Original Art, For Sale
4401 Original Art, Wanted
4405 Sketch Books
4410 Big Little Books, For Sale
4411 Big Little Books, Wanted
4420 Books - General, For Sale
4421 Books - General, Wanted
4422 Collectible Card Games, For Sale
4423 Collectible Card Games, Wanted
4424 Computer Software / Supplies, For Sale
4425 Computer Software / Supplies, Wanted
4430 Paperbacks, For Sale
4431 Paperbacks, Wanted
4440 Pulp, For Sale
4441 Pulp, Wanted
4450 Magazines, For Sale
4451 Magazines, Wanted
4452 Science Fiction, For Sale
4453 Science Fiction, Wanted
4600 Reprints, For Sale
4601 Reprints, Wanted
4605 Phone Cards, For Sale
4606 Phone Cards, Wanted
4610 Portfolios / Posters, For Sale
4611 Portfolios / Posters, Wanted
4630 Trading Cards, For Sale
4631 Trading Cards, Wanted
4650 Oldtime Radio, For Sale
4651 Oldtime Radio, Wanted
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- Nov 15 CA**, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.
- Nov 19 CA**, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.
- Nov 22 CA**, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.
- Nov 26 CA**, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.
- Nov 28-30 CA**, Dixon-Sacramento. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Dixon Fairgrounds. Hwy. 113 S off I-80 at cattlemen's, SH: Fri. 4pm-9pm, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm, T: 90, F: \$150. for 1, \$135. for 3 or more, A: \$5. daily, \$10. 3-day pass, under 12 free. CA Sports Card Shows, PH: 530-241-4063.
- Nov 29 CA**, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.
- Dec 3 CA**, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

909-444-7955.

- Dec 6 CA**, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.
- Dec 10 CA**, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.
- Dec 12 CA**, San Francisco. Comic Books & Collectibles Show with Jerry Rice & Orlando Cepeda, Cow Palace. Ken Wacker, PH: 707-318-6168.
- Dec 13 CA**, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.
- Dec 14 CA**, Sacramento. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Scottish Rite Ctr. 6151 H St., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 80-6' & 8', F: \$50-\$60., A: \$4. Dan Houck, 6278 Gloria Dr., Sacramento, CA 95831. PH: 916-395-1107.
- Dec 17 CA**, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.
- Dec 20 CA**, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.
- Dec 24 CA**, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.
- Dec 27 CA**, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

ripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

- Dec 31 CA**, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

CONNECTICUT

- Nov 21-23 CT**, Meriden. Collectorfest, Westfield Shoppingtown. I-691 exit 6, T: 60, SH: mall hours, A: free. Linda Thimell, 169 Elm St., Enfield, CT 06082. PH: 860-749-8702.
- Nov 28-30 CT**, Trumbull. Comic Book Show, Westfield Shoppingtown. Merritt Pkwy. Rt. 15, exit 48, SH: mall hours, T: 40, F: \$180., A: free. Mike Riccio Sports LLC, Mike Riccio, PO Box 162, Botsford, CT 06404. PH: 203-364-1209.
- Nov 30 CT**, East Hartford. Comic Convention, Elks Hall. 148 Roberts St., SH: 11am-5pm, F: \$50., A: .99. The Bookie, Hal Kinney, 155 Burnside Ave., East Hartford, CT 06108. PH: 860-289-1208 (afternoons).
- Dec 28 CT**, East Hartford. Comic Convention, Elks Hall. 148 Roberts St., SH: 11am-5pm, F: \$50., A: .99. The Bookie, Hal Kinney, 155 Burnside Ave., East Hartford, CT 06108. PH: 860-289-1208 (afternoons).

DELAWARE

- Dec 28 DE**, Newark. Sports Card, Comic Book & Collectible Show, Aetna Fire Hall. Rt. 273, SH: 10am-3pm, A: \$2., 12 & under free. A to Z Promos., Bob Harper, 822 Trophy Way, Bear, DE 19701. PH: 302-438-0967.

FLORIDA

- Nov 30 FL**, Orlando. Collectible Show, Radisson Barcello Hotel. 8444 International Dr., SH: 10am-5pm, A: free. CCC Promos., PH: 954-579-7398.
- Dec 6 FL**, Jacksonville. Collectibles Show, Holiday Inn. 9150 Bay Meadows Rd., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 50, A: \$5. Charles Cerrito, PH: 954-579-7398.
- Dec 14 FL**, Daytona Beach. Comic Book Conv., Ramada Inn Speedway. 1798 W. Int'l. Speedway Blvd., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.
- Dec 21 FL**, Orlando. Collectible Show, Radisson Barcello Hotel. 8444 International Dr., SH: 10am-5pm, A: free. CCC Promos., PH: 954-579-7398.

Dec 27-28 FL, Fort Lauderdale. Holiday Convention, Pompano Beach Civic Ctr. 1801 NE 6th St., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 100, A: \$6., \$10. 2-day pass. Charles Cerrito, PH: 954-579-7398.

GEORGIA

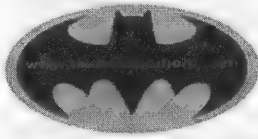
- Nov 16 GA**, Atlanta. Comic Convention, Marriott Hotel-Century Ctr. I-85 exit 91, Clairmont Rd., SH: 11am-5pm, T: 66-6', F: \$250., A: \$4. Wesley Tillander, PO Box 1251, Hogansville, GA 30230. PH: 706-837-4976.

ILLINOIS

- Nov 16 IL**, Orland Park. Sports Cards & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: \$33., A: \$1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.
- Nov 23 IL**, Bridgeview. Comic Book, NASCAR & More Show, Oremus Center. 1 blk. W. of Harlem Ave. at 79th St., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 65-8', F: \$35., A: \$2. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.
- Nov 28-30 IL**, Arlington Heights. Chicago Tardis-40 Years of Doctor Who, Sheraton Chicago Northwest. 3400 W. Euclid Ave., SH: Fri. 9am-9pm, Sat. 9am-11pm, Sun. 9am-5pm, A: \$30-\$35. 1 day pass, \$50-\$60. 3 day pass. Allen Entertainment, PO Box 2660, Glen Ellyn, IL 60138. PH: 630-790-0905.
- Nov 29 IL**, Orland Park. Sports Cards & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: \$33., A: \$1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.
- Dec 13 IL**, Bridgeview. Sports Cards & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: \$33., A: \$1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.
- Dec 14 IL**, Bridgeview. Toy Con, Oremus Community Ctr. 7900 S. Oketo Ave., SH: 8:30am-2pm, T: 60, A: \$3., 10 & under free. Terry Mannix, PH: 708-237-1645.
- Dec 28 IL**, Orland Park. Sports Cards & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: \$33., A: \$1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.
- Jan 4 IL**, Bridgeview. Comic Book, NASCAR, Toys, Sports Cards, Hot Wheels & More Show, Oremus Center. 1 blk. W. of Harlem Ave. at 79th St., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 65-8', F: \$35. for 1, \$60. for 2, A: \$2. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

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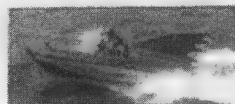
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Nov 21-23 IN, Indianapolis. Gamefest, State Fairgrounds. 1202 E. 38th St. Advantage Conv. Serv., PO Box 1128, Antwerp, OH 45813. PH: 419-258-1780, FAX: 419-258-1870.

IOWA

Dec 6 IA, Council Bluffs. Comic Book Convention, Best Western Crossroads. 2216 27th Ave., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

Dec 7 IA, Des Moines. Comic Book Conv., Holiday Inn. 5000 Merle Hay Rd. SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

KANSAS

Nov 15-16 KS, Shawnee. ComiCon, Civic Centre. 11837 Johnson Dr., SH: Sat. 10am-5pm, Sun. 10am-4pm, T: 70-6', F: \$125-\$150, A: \$5., under 7 free. PH: 816-924-1566.

Dec 27 KS, Shawnee. Comic Book Convention, Hampton Inn. I-435 at Midland Dr. exit, SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Ken, PH: 913-764-8888.

MASSACHUSETTS

Nov 16 MA, South Attleboro. Comic Book, Toys, Non-Sports Card & Collectible Show, Knights of Columbus. 304 Highland Ave., Rt. 123, SH: 10am-3pm, T: 59, A: \$3., under 16 free. Harry Martin, 936 South St., Wrentham, MA 02093. PH: 508-384-8491.

Nov 22-23 MA, Framingham. Boston Super Megafest, Sheraton Hotel. 1657 Worcester Rd, MA Pike exit 12 K&S Promos., John DiCicco, 57 Bay View Dr., Shrewsbury, MA 01545. PH: 800-505-8697 or 201-261-4982.

Dec 7 MA, Boston. Comic Book & Toy Spectacular, Radisson Hotel. Formerly Howard Johnson 57, 200 Stuart St., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 120-8', F: \$95., A: \$5. Monkey House Entertainment, David Cummings, PH: 978-388-6576.

MICHIGAN

Nov 21-23 MI, Livonia. Sports Card, Comic Book, Coin, Collectible Show, Livonia Mall. 7 Mile & Middlebelt, SH: Fri. & Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 11am-5pm, T: 80, F: \$80. for 1, \$150. for 2, A: free. Bruce Mugerian Show Promos., PH: 248-788-1178.

Dec 12-13 MI, Livonia. Sports Card, Comic Book, Coin, Collectible Show, Livonia Mall. 7 Mile & Middlebelt, SH: Fri. & Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 11am-5pm, T: 80, F: \$80. for 1, \$150. for 2, A: free. Bruce Mugerian Show Promos., PH: 248-788-1178.

Dec 27 MI, Livonia. Encore Con, Elks 2246, 31117 Plymouth Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50, F: \$45. in advance, \$50. day of show, A: \$3., ages 6 & under free. Motor City Conventions, Michael Goldman or Gary Bishop, 19785 W. 12 Mile Rd. PMB 231, Southfield, MI 48076. PH: 248-426-8059.

Dec 27-28 MI, Madison Heights. Collectable Comic Book Show, UFCW Union Hall Local 876. 876 Horace Brown Dr., SH: 9am-3pm. Classic Prod., Joseph Pellegrino, PO Box 472, Fraser, MI 48026. PH: 586-775-3289 or 790-6290.

MISSOURI

Nov 14-16 MO, Kansas City. Comic Books & Collectibles Show, Metro North Mall. 400 NW Barry Rd., SH: Fri.-Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 12noon-6pm, T: 55-8', F: \$100., A: free. D&S Collectibles, Donnie Hall, 3917 Cambridge Crossing Dr., St. Charles, MO 63304. PH: 816-560-8180.

Nov 23 MO, Shrewsbury. Comic Book Show, Memorial Post Hall Unit 111. 7300 Lansdowne, SH: 10:30am-3pm, T: 40, F: \$30., A: \$2. Anthony Gladish, 4253 Fatima Dr. #3, Saint Louis, MO 63123. PH: 314-544-2812.

Dec 28 MO, Chesterfield. Comic Book Convention, Hampton Inn & Stes. 5 McBride & Son Ctr. Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

NEW JERSEY

Nov 15 NJ, Jackson. Comic Book, Memorabilia & Sports Card Show, VFW. SH: 9am-3pm. Shari or Jeff, PH: 732-833-9224.

Nov 22-23 NJ, Bordentown. Comic Book Show, Armory. Rt. 206, SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 50, F: \$90., A: \$2. RK Promos., Rob or Karen Gomberg, 3 Rachel Ct., Franklin Park, NJ 08823. PH: 732-422-9365 or Mike Leon, PH: 215-396-8016.

Nov 30 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book Expo, Holiday Inn. Rt. 46 Service Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-8', F: \$60., A: \$2. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07424. PH: 973-783-0608.

Dec 7 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Co. #1 Firemen's Conv. Ctr. 1 Parish Dr. off Rt. 23 N., Lincoln Park Exit, SH: 8:30am-3pm, T: 80, A: \$1, under 12 free. Phil De Mario, PO Box 4094, Wayne, NJ 07474. PH: 973-726-9897.

Dec 14 NJ, Clifton. Comic Book Expo, Recreation Ctr. 1232 Main Ave., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-6', F: \$50., A: free. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07042. PH: 973-783-0608.

Dec 28 NJ, Bordentown. Comic Book Show, Armory. Rt. 206 S., SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 50, F: \$45., A: \$2. RK Promos., Rob or Karen Gomberg, 3 Rachel Ct., Franklin Park, NJ 08823. PH: 732-422-9365 or Mike Leon, PH: 215-396-8016.

Dec 28 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book Expo, Holiday Inn. Rt. 46 Service Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-8', F: \$60., A: \$2. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07424. PH: 973-783-0608.

Jan 4 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Co. #1 Firehouse. 1 Parish Dr. off Rt. 23 N., Lincoln Park Exit, SH: 8am-3pm, T: 80, A: \$1, under 12 free. Phil De Mario, PO Box 4094, Wayne, NJ 07474. PH: 973-726-9897.

NEW YORK

Nov 16 NY, Rochester. CollectorFest, The Party House. 677 Beahan Rd., SH: 10am-3pm, T: 30-8', F: \$40., A: free. Ernie's Cards, Ernest Orlando, 264 Park Ave. Rear Apt., Rochester, NY 14607. PH: 585-241-3198.

Nov 23 NY, Brooklyn. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Golden Gate

Inn. Knapp St. & Shore Pkwy., SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. Mark, PH: 718-266-1625.

Nov 28-30 NY, New York City. 5th Annual National Comic Book, Art & Toys Show, Metropolitan Pavilion. 125 W. 18th St., T: 100. PH: 201-569-2011 or FAX: 201-865-3288.

Dec 6 NY, New York City. Collectors Fest Sports Cards, CD's, Records, Tapes, Videos, Mem., Comic Books & More Show, Holy Cross School. 332 W. 43rd St., SH: 10am-5pm, F: \$40. for 1, \$70. for 2, A: \$3. Gary Lyons, PH: 718-972-3872.

Dec 7 NY, Brooklyn. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Golden Gate Inn. Knapp St. & Shore Pkwy., SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. Mark, PH: 718-266-1625.

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Dec 21 NY, Rochester. CollectorFest, The Party House. 677 Beahan Rd., SH: 10am-3pm, T: 30-8', F: \$40., A: free. Ernie's Cards, Ernest Orlando, 264 Park Ave. Rear Apt., Rochester, NY 14607. PH: 585-241-3198.

Jan 4 NY, Melville-Long Island. Collectibles Show. 585 Route 110, SH: 9am-3pm, T: 57, A: free. George Schulteis, PO Box 1654, Seaford, NY 11783. PH: 516-804-0047 or 361-9503.

NORTH CAROLINA

Dec 5-7 NC, Salisbury. Comic Book, Sports Card, Records, Toys, Coins & More Show, Mall. I-85 exit 76, SH: Fri. & Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 1pm-6pm, T: 60, F: \$60., A: free. Mike Dentino, 849 9th Ave. Pl. NE, Hickory, NC 28601. PH: 828-328-1029.

Dec 7 NC, Raleigh. Comic Con, Clarion Hotel. 4501 Creedmoor Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 23-6', F: \$70., A: free. Lyn Anderson, PO Box 99201, Raleigh, NC 27624. PH: 919-844-1758.

OHIO

Nov 29-30 OH, Columbus. Mid-Ohio-Con, Hilton Hotel. Easton Town Ctr., SH: Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm, T: 150, A: \$15. R.A.P. Promos., Roger Price, PO Box 3831, Mansfield, OH 44907. PH: 419-526-1427.

Jan 4 OH, Cleveland. Comic & Sci-Fi Con, Knight's Party Center. KOC Hall, 29101 Euclid Ave. (.5 mi. E. of I-90 & Exit 186), SH: 10am-3pm, T: 35-8', F: \$55., A: \$2., 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

PENNSYLVANIA

Nov 14-16 PA, Allentown. Toys, Comic Books, Diecast & Sports Card Show, PA Expo Center. Stackhouse Events, Pat Stackhouse, 625 8th Ave., Prospect Park, PA 19076. PH: 302-345-7208 or 610-461-1830.

Dec 6 PA, Allentown. Lehigh Valley Comic Con, Schnectsville Fire Co. 4550 Old Packerhouse Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 60-8', F: \$60. for 1st, \$50. for 2nd, \$40. for 3rd, A: \$3., 12 & under free. Lance Hawk, 1290 Vermont Ave., Allentown, PA 18103. PH: 610-797-3357.

Dec 6-7 PA, Pittsburgh. Comic & Toy Convention, Expo Mart at Monroeville Mall. Bus. Rt. 22, Monroeville, Exit 6 PA Tpke., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 450-6', A: \$5., \$3., under 12. D. Alessandria, 456 Old Farm Ln., Johnstown, PA 15904. PH: 877-967-1500.

Dec 14 PA, Philadelphia. Comic-Con, Stadium Holiday Inn. 10th St. & Packer Ave. (I-95 exit 19 or I-76 exit 350), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50-6', F: \$70. for 1, \$135. for 2, A: \$3. Derek Woywood, PO Box 313, Clementon, NJ 08021. PH: 856-782-0817.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Nov 15 SC, Columbia. Comic-Con, Super 8 Motel. 773 St. Andrews Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-8', A: \$2. Heroes & Dragons, 1563B Broad River Rd., Columbia, SC 29210. PH: 803-731-4376 or 772-9198.

Nov 29 SC, Greenville. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Comfort Inn. I-85 & Mauldin Rd. (exit 46C), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 28, F: \$38., A: \$1. Rick Fortenberry, PH: 704-424-3453 or Tom Waldrop, PH: 864-244-7424.

TENNESSEE

Nov 16 TN, Knoxville. Comic Con, Holiday Inn Select. Cedar Bluff Rd., I-40 exit 378, SH: 10am-4pm, T: 40, A: \$2. Steve Riley, 2920 Brock Ave., Knoxville, TN 37919. PH: 865-455-8410.

TEXAS

Nov 22 TX, San Antonio-Live Oak. Sports Card, Comic Book & Toy Show, Civic Center. Pat Booker Rd., I-35 & Hwy. 1604, SH: 9am-5pm, T: 100-8', F: \$40., A: \$2., under 13 free. Eckman's Books & Collectibles, Dale E. Eckman, 8050 Pioneer Oak, Converse, TX 78109. PH: 210-945-0003.

VIRGINIA

Nov 23 VA, Richmond. CRCC Fall Show, Holiday Inn Crossroads. 2000 Staples Mill Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 35, F: \$65., A: \$2. Chesterfield Comic Collectors, Guy Rose, 6413 Old Bern Rd., Chesterfield, VA 23832. PH: 804-796-4903.

Dec 7 VA, Tysons Corner-McLean. CapiCons.com Comic Book, Sports Card & Toy Show, Westpark Hotel. 8401 Westpark Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 80-6', F: \$95. for 1st, \$90. for 2nd, \$85. ea. add'l., A: \$3., under 5 free. Jeff Rocen, 906 S. Kenwood Ave., Baltimore, MD 21224. PH: 703-912-1993 or 800-222-2057.

WASHINGTON

Nov 16 WA, Seattle. ComiCard Convention, Seattle Ctr. NW Rooms. 101 Republican St., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 80-8', F: \$85., A: \$6. Steve Miner, PO Box 55853, Seattle, WA 98155. PH: 206-365-1207.

WISCONSIN

Nov 23 WI, West Allis. Comic Book Convention, Burnham Bowl. 6016 W. Burnham Ave., SH: 11am-4pm. Clayton Dietl, PH: 414-328-3675.

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Some complimentary suggestions

Try reading the damned books

According to a story broken online by Heidi MacDonald, DC freelancers and staffers have been — for the past 14 years — taking their comp copies of DC titles and swapping them in at New York mainstay store Jim Hanley's Universe (which is seriously considering changing its name to Trader Jim's) for store credit. In fact, Wednesdays have apparently become something of a regular social gathering.

By startling coincidence, 14 years ago is when I became a full-time freelance writer and pretty much stopped coming into the city on a regular basis. So the paranoid in me thinks that everyone waited until I was off staff and then said, "OK, David's gone! Party at Hanley's! Woo-hoo!" Even on those occasions when I came into the city, I was usually on the West Side and so went to Midtown Comics where people were just — y'know — buying comic books.

Once upon a time, comics companies endeavored to guard against this very thing. Marvel Comics — back when it sent out comps — used to stamp "Complimentary Copy, Not for Resale," or something to that effect, on every single book. The reasoning was that a freelancer, say, could take his comics, sell them, and get money for them. And the retailer could turn around, resell them, and get money for them. So who *wasn't* getting money for them? Marvel, obviously. Furthermore, if it became a major black (or gray) market, it meant a retailer could cut back his orders, counting on the comp copies, and that's 50, 75, 100 comics every month that Marvel wasn't getting any money for. Which may not sound like much. I mean, heck, it's not like they're gonna file for bankruptcy, right? Still, it adds up.

The problem was that there's no slick, time-saving, low-cost way to imprint "Not for Resale" on the covers of comic books. There's no way to do it but to do it: hand-stamp every single one, however long it takes. Eventually, Marvel decided that the cost of having the books stamped was more than what it'd lose to under-the-table resale (and nobody was thrilled about receiving defaced comic books), so the practice halted. And now the Marvel comp list has been whittled to almost nothing, so it's moot.

DC, meantime, maintained its generosity and kept the books coming: *all* the books, even the expensive hardcovers (not to mention the annual freelancer Christmas present). Remember how I was mentioning a couple weeks ago that DC's nice-guy approach to reorder and reprint availability was resulting in a lack of appreciation from some quarters? Well, pretty much the same thing appears to have been happening with the comp list.

And, as is usually the case when something is taken for granted, the abuses of the privilege mounted, until DC couldn't turn a blind eye to it any more and DC staffers were informed they could no longer trade in their books at Hanley's. How DC can tell someone what to do with their own property once it's given to them, I'm really not sure. Nor do I know how enforceable it is. Perhaps DC can form a crack group called The Un-



By Peter David

tradeables to police it. Since Elliot Ness isn't around, tap Elliot S! to head it. Have them kick in the door at Hanley's and shout, "Freeze, Traders!"

One DC staffer told MacDonald, "We just don't know what to do on Wednesday's [sic] anymore. It used to be a fun thing to do, to meet at Hanley's and check out the week's comics. Now, there's nothing to do."

Nothing to do?

OK, first thing that comes to mind is: *Try reading the damned books.*

Second thing: We used to socialize by playing volleyball or softball. Don't want to sweat as much? Go bowling. It's indoors, it's social, it's not that expensive, lots of people can participate, and, while you're waiting to bowl, you can *try reading the damned books.*

I'm sorry, I doubt I'll win many friends for saying this, but, while fans are laboring under backbreaking cover prices and working their butts off to support their hobby, I'm not feeling tons of sympathy for guys complaining they have too many comic books and too much free time.

Apparently the "too many comic books" problem is part of what led to all this. They were piling up all over the offices, cluttering up the joint. Nobody knew what to do with them. Well, heck, speaking as someone who *doesn't* sell or trade his books, here's some notions as to what people can do with their comics — aside from the obvious suggestion that's not suitable for a family newspaper:

1) Give them away at Halloween. Here at *casa* David, we have lived by a simple philosophy when it comes to Trick or Treaters: Rot a child's brain, not his teeth. Every year, we divide the books by age-appropriateness and give them out in lieu of candy. When we first started doing it, we got a lot of puzzled looks. Going into our second decade of the practice, we now have a reputation. Kids come from far and wide, way out of the neighborhood, to find "the house that gives away comic books." Granted, sometimes you have to deal with kids out to barter. ("Got any *X-Men*?") But, for the most part, they're very appreciative.

2) Give them to local libraries. The first time I went to my library with a couple boxloads of comics in good condition, I thought the guy who oversaw the Young Adult section was gonna plotz from gratitude.

Comics vanish off the shelves — literally, more often than not. Nor do they stand up all that well to repeated readings. I gave him a ton of monthlies, trade paperbacks, hardcovers. He was ecstatic. Either they'll go on the shelves or, if the library is overstocked, it'll wind up selling them the next time the library needs to have a fundraiser. Either way, the books are going to a good cause.

3) Give them to medical facilities. Particularly pediatric facilities. Doctors' offices, dentists' offices, childrens' wards, *all* benefit from having comic books to keep kids occupied.

4) Barbershops. I don't know about you, but my first exposure to comic books was at my local barber-shop when I was about 5. There were some well-thumbed Harvey Comics there, and I read them and reread them. The first thing I did was take a copy of *Casper*, borrow a pencil, and connect the outline dots of Casper's body that showed up in some panels. I didn't know those were supposed to indicate that he'd turned invisible. I figured they were there for audience participation, like *Winky Dink*.

5) Did you ever cobble together cheap bookshelves using bricks and planks? Same basic idea. Roll your comics up, dip them in acrylic, and let them dry. You'll have acrylic comic-book logs. Use them to construct snappy furniture, such as a coffee table. If you can score some old Marvel treasury editions, those would be good for the legs. Then, construct the main part of it using rolled acrylic comics. Get a sheet of glass for the surface, and you're all set.

6) You say you're a musician and you want to turn your brother's old bedroom into a recording studio? No problem. Take all those hardcovers that you don't know what to do with and screw them into the wall, neatly stacked in single rows. Because of the thickness of the books, they'll absorb sound as well as, if not better than, acoustic tiles. And they'll be *much* more decorative.

7) What's that? You say you're drowning in heating costs every winter, tons of money is going right up and out the attic, insulation is too expensive, and that paper shredder your wife bought you last Christmas is just sitting there gathering dust? Is that what's bothering you, bunk? No sweat. Take a day off, drop a couple month's worth of comic books through the paper shredder, line the attic, watch your heating bills drop, and, best of all, use whatever's leftover for raw materials the very next time your kid has a project that requires *papier-mâché*.

Any other notions? ♦

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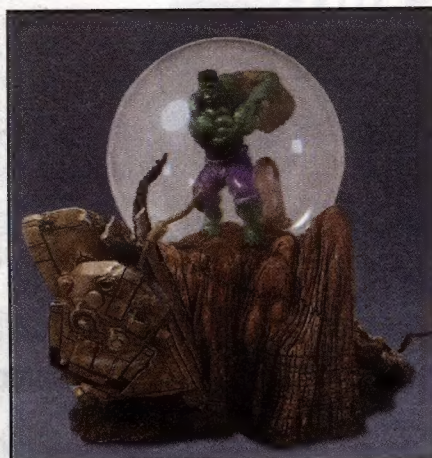
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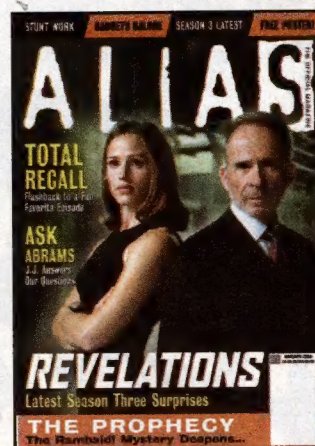
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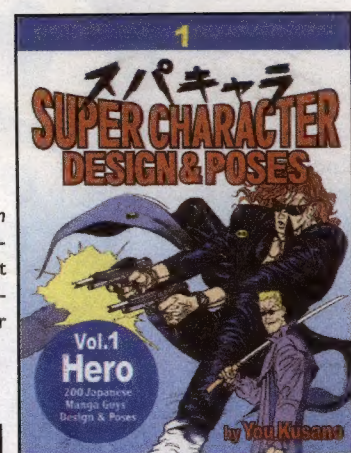
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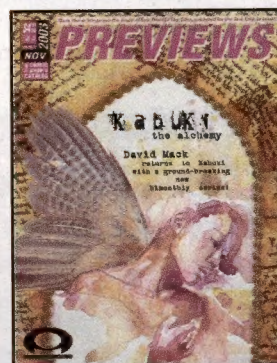
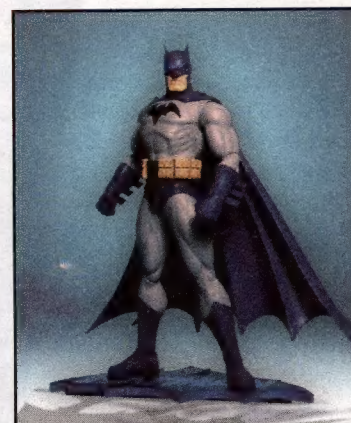
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